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IN THE OTHER MAN'S PLACE
BY
GEORGE GRAHAM CURRIE



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IN THE OTHER MAN'S PLACE

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SOME LATTER DAY
TRAGEDIES IN VERSE

By
GEORGE GRAHAM CURRIE

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No. 1.

PREFACE.

“Fair floweret, blooming where no gardener strays,
The one pure spark that makes mankind divine,
The pearl that is not thrown away on swine,
SWEET SYMPATHY, inspirer of immortal lays!
Thou touch of nature that proves all earth kin,
That urges poets sing the daisy’s praise,
That points the sluggard to the ant’s wise ways
And whispers to the sportsman: ‘this is sin:’
Make thou thy home within my warring breast;
Teach me to love my neighbor as myself;
I fain would do, with greater, truer zest,
The deeds that are not bought with vulgar pelf;
Be thou my guide when shame-tossed brothers cry,
That I may share the load that makes them sigh.”

WHEN in my twenty-first year I was about to leave my Eastern home for the far West, I handed an autograph album to my father, and asked him to write therein such general advice as he would want me to follow through life, if it should happen to be the last time he would have an opportunity of so advising me. In about a week’s time he returned the book to me and I found written over his name the following precept:

“In judging always put yourself
in the other man’s place.”

I have tried to live up to this paternal admonition and this volume published twenty-three years after, is a direct result. The stories that follow go into the details of the white slave traffic, of lynching bees, of strikes and boycotts and are striven to be told from the possible standpoints of the victim.

THE AUTHOR.

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“Tom now lost hope
“And groaned within his soul *There is no God.*”

II. THE DEATH OF HELEN. ✓

“Where soon all oblivious of questioning eyes
In gratitude smiling she peacefully dies.”

III. HANGED WITHOUT A TRIAL. ✓

“No eye but God’s surveys the darkling heath:
Jim’s stiffening body is alone with Death.”

IV. THE PASSING OF UNCLE SAM. ✓

“And you, aye, you, who would now stop my
mouth
“If you could, may, ere you know, be victims
“Of the same far-reaching conspiracy.”

THE SEAMY SIDE OF STRIKES
OR
THREE GLIMPSES AT THE LIFE OF A
LONDON LABOR LEADER

BEGUN IN LONDON, ENGLAND
IN 1898

ADVERTISEMENT.

TOM SMITH, the hero of the following lines, is not placed before the reader as a Bacon or a John Stuart Mill. His ideas are open to criticism. They are his side of the story, however, and only as such are they intended to be taken. The author disclaims any responsibility for the truth or fallacy of any argument herein brought forward. He has endeavored to be true to the character he describes, and upon that point alone does he hope for judgment. The story is largely reminiscent of the engineers' strike in London in 1898.

The mechanics and laboring classes in the British Isles universally apply the name "Master" to the owner or superintendent of the works in which they are employed. To an American or Canadian ear there is a strange servility in the term that confines its use in America in that sense more particularly to the ex-slaves of the South. May it long be so confined for the word in itself seems to authorize a distinction that is not in keeping with the spirit of the Age.

"Big Ben" that plays such an important part in the story is the name given to a very large deep-toned bell hanging in the tower of the Parliament Buildings at Westminster. It strikes the hour year in and year out with monotonous regularity and, on account of its size and the place it occupies, is the pride of all London.

PART I

COMFORT.

"SILENCE," said the chairman, "Smith has the floor"
And immediately order was obtained.
The recognition was discomfiting,
For Tom half liked the babel of voices,
Since it deadened the thumping of his heart;
But now, in the stillness, each sound is heard
And all eyes turn to scan his every movement:

"Men and Mr. Chairman:" but here he stopped;
A rustling dress in the adjoining room
Told him of still another listener:
Beneath his breath a prayer went heavenward—
"God give me power to do credit to her"—
Then he resumed his speech:

"I cannot talk
"As well as I can toil. Twenty long years
"Of hard, continued labor do not serve
"To make a man's tongue flowery. You know me—
"You know that if I do speak plain and stamm'ring,
"My words are from my heart and are sincere.

"This little home where you are met tonight
"Is mine. To have it I have slaved and saved.
"Every comfort represents a struggle;
"Early and late, patiently, steadily,
"I have toiled nor wasted one red penny—
"Yet, after all, the Masters I have served
"Would call this, my paradise, a hovel;
"And wonder how a man could be content
"To live in such a place. And yet I am.
"I'm happy as a king. Six months ago
"I took a step of which I cannot help

"But speak in terms of pleasure and of pride;
"I married Annie then, and she now shares
"This 'hovel' with me. P'raps that fact explains
"Why I'm content—for 'tis a palace fair
"When she is in it."

Cheers of approval
Greeted this remark. It had a true ring,
And true men like truth. The hearty applause
Made Tom more at home:

"This striking business
"Is a serious matter—it needs deep thought.
"If it were for myself alone I'd say:
"Drop it comrades right here for I can work
"As I have worked, and be content as now.
"But many workmen are much poorer off;
"Their hours are longer, and their wage less fair.
"It is the strong man's duty and his pride
"To help the weak. All pitying eyes must see
"There is a screw loose somewhere. No Heaven
"Could ever mean that they who make most wealth
"At the expense of greatest exertion—
"At the expense of half those higher pleasures
"That raise mankind above the grovelling brute;—
"No Heaven of Love, I say, could mean such men
"To want what they've made at such killing cost."

"Hear, hear!" resounded from the delegates
And Tom duly encouraged thus went on:

"If we chose our vocation, or in fact
"If parents chose it for us, we might then
"Be justly punished for our lack of sense;

"But the pittance doled out to our fathers,
"And to their father's fathers before them,
"Thrust slavery on us all without a choice.
"For little boots it whether 'tis the lash,
"Or slow starvation that the victim fears,
"Who serves to save his scanty beggared life,
"Is but a slave and dare not own his soul.
"Is this the liberty that makes men great?
"Such treatment is too harsh for even foes.
"Is this the freedom Britons loudly boast?
"Then save us from it if it is, my lads.

"But no! 'tis gold, not Britain is the cause;
"And long our Masters, by its studied use,—
"More cruel, than the lash—have kept us slaves
"That they might take the millions that we make."

"Hear, hear!" "You're right, Lad." "Shame on the
Masters."
And the men began to grow excited.

"Oh yes, they work—their four or five-houred day
"On cushioned chairs quite wearies them to death.
"Their slaves must suffer for the over-work;
"And so they pass us with uplifted nose.
"We are the cause of all their many cares.
"What, with refusals to be ground to dust,
"Or paltry begging for a shilling raise,
"Their lives are pestered and their health impaired
"And off they hurry for a six-weeks' rest;
"While we toil harder than the wherewithal
"May be forthcoming for the lazy jaunt.
"Brain-work is more fatiguing, so they say;
"We little know, they tell us, how it wears.
"But we do know that those who've tried them both

"Select this tiresome brain-work ev'rytime.
"The fact is, Comrades, and you'll bear me out:
"We'd all be brain men if we had our way."

"Hear, hear!" "That we would!" and "We will, you'll see!"
Shouted the workmen with a lusty will.

"Sometimes a creature from our toiling ranks
"Sees our debasement and the Masters' gold,
"And since by honor to grow rich is vain,
"Decides upon the end by other means.
"Then by a course of politic intrigue;
"By cringing smile, by spying on his mates;
"By menial zeal that only toadies learn;
"He sinks to be our driver; whence in time
"It needs but little training for the drop
"Even to the chair of a slave owner.
"And once he gains that depth his day's at hand.
"By drawing life-blood from one's helpless slaves
"We mount with swiftness to the highest height—
"Title and wealth and luxury and power
"All ours—if we'll but sink to slave drivers."

"Aye, Aye!" "'Tis all too true!" the listeners cry.

"An infinite God in His great goodness
"Looks down on us even in the workshop,
"And straightway appliances are thought of
"To save our labor and decrease our toil?
"But lo! the would-be mercy proves our scourge.
"Whetted in his appetite for riches
"The slave owner sees in the invention
"Only a shorter cut to wealth and power.
"The machine is worked to its utmost bound,

"The market is glutted; the prices fall;
"And we again must make good the shortage."

"Hear, hear!" "Curse the patents!" "We wont have them!"

Are the various cries to this period.

"But we must blame ourselves for all this woe.
"We cheer the jockeys that ride us to death,
"And like the slaves in the time of Moses
"We side with the Masters against our friends.
"Men! we are the backbone of our country;
"It is such as we who fight her battles;
"Our fathers' blood made Britain what she is,
"And our own blood must flow for what she'll be!
"One form of slavery died in Cromwell's time;
"Yet in its place we have another now:
"Let us be Cromwells! Let us crush to earth
"The golden tyrant that is now our bane.
"True honor lies in work. Work is the source
"From which nobility should take its rise.
"The men who make the wealth by sweat of brow;
"Whose numbers place the value on the toil;—
"These, are the benefactors of our race,
"These, their own work, should first of all enjoy.
"If there be drones they have a right to life
"So long, and only, as it suits the whim
"Of those who feed them. They are costly toys
"That, as we journey, we are best without."

"Death to the drones!" "Only workers should live!"
"We'll show them!" say the swaying delegates;
And Tom, who has forgotten all reserve
Continues his harangue with heated voice:

“That there are men e’en in the richest ranks
“Who fain would travel in the honest way
“None will deny. But they are handicapped
“By a false system. They are born to wealth
“That was amassed at the cost of virtue.
“Fortune means misfortune. Only by wiles
“Practiced in stealth on those who are helpless;
“By robbing workers of their just award;
“And threatening ruin to who wont submit;
“By underhanded arts that sear men’s souls;
“By bribery, corruption and the like;
“Can millions be obtained in any age.

“A few grown piteous, when their nests are lined—
“Or fearful, may be, of the wrath to come—
“Or having other knives that must be ground—
“Make large bequests of their ill-gotten gains
“To found some home—some prison for the poor—
“Some hospital, or college, or some church;
“And hope by late munificence to cure,
“And pull the wool across men’s dazzled eyes.
“But when before a just avenging God
“They compromise with conscience in that way;
“’Tis one more proof that we are being wronged
“And brings them nearer to their gaping doom.”

“Hear, hear!” “That it does!” “They’ll rue it some
day!”
Fills up the breathing place that Tom here takes.

“But we have lived in serfdom long enough;
“The time is ripe to break our galling chain;
“Each hour we slave but gives our foe more strength—
“More gold with which to crush resistance down.
“Until each class is high the race is low.

"The so-called high should raise all left beneath.
"It is a fault when men their kind desert,
"And shows that after all there are none high.
"Hence on ourselves we take no menial task—
"This raising of our race from slaves to men;
"And though we fail, we win a hero's crown,
"A Wilberforce's laurels wreathe our brow.

"If we can only stick together, lads,
"And brave the ruin that will seem to stare;
"We'll bring our haughty tyrants to their knees;
"While freedom's sun will once again burst forth
"And pierce the fissures of the scattering clouds.
"As, when in war, the side that makes the charge
"Has taken an advantage of its foe,
"So, we, first started, gain an impetus
"That will take greater strength to overcome.
"With this to aid us, and a cause so just;
"A week or two—perhaps a month at most—
"Will land us, if united, at the goal.
"That, lads, will be a Waterloo indeed;
"And generations that are yet unborn
"Will teach their children of our stand for right;
"And influence a freedom now unknown."

(Applause loud and continued from the men.)

"But we must be united; there's the rub.
"Since if we fail, in one sense all is lost,—
"As failure is a precedent for wrong—
"A reason why we should not fight again.
"This must be weighed before an arm is raised;
"And those who rally to our battle line,
"To shout our cry and fight for Equal Rights,
"Must burn all bridges that they leave behind.

"We ask fair play; 'tis all a Briton wants;
"Just what we make—no more—and yet no less.
"If so-called brain-work in the light of truth
"Can make a just demand for greater gains,
"And prove its thought more potent than our act,
"I say be honest, let it have its due.
"But if hard work with horny, twisted hands;
"With shoulders bending 'neath the heavy load;
"With eyes trained only to one tedious task;
"With ears unused save to a workshop's din;
"And limbs scarce ours so hazardous their toil;
"If this I say does not deserve a lot
"More cheerful than the begg'ry now disbursed—
" 'Tis better to be dead. We are not brutes.
"Unlike the patient ox, that children lead,
"Oblivious of its state, to drag the plow,
"We know our shame; and if it still must last—
"The grave holds out some hope. And if we die
"Employers may be forced to work, not steal,
"And own the hardships that they scoff while ours.

"I am no 'kicker' men. I've lived thus long
"And saved a pittance for a rainy day:
"If, as I said before, my case alone
"Stood in the balance of the tottering scale,
" 'Twould be my pleasure to advise *Work On*.
"But when I look about and see the gloom
"That clusters 'round the life of comrades true,
"And see them groping in the darkness drear
"For joys their stunted lives can never know,
"My heart rebels; and with you all I say:
"Break, break the shackles; let us rise in might
"And wield our only weapon, which is *Strike*."

"Bravo, bravo!" sang out with one accord
The roused committeemen in ardor wild.

"I move we go on strike," a deep voice said.

"Second the motion," came from half a score.

"Moved and seconded that we go on strike,"
Said the chairman, "All in favor say Aye."

"Ayes have it." "Carried unanimously."

"Move we tell the Masters our decision
"On Monday morning, and demand same pay
"For eight hours as we're now getting for ten."
Carried.

"Move that chairman, secretary,
"And Tom Smith be deputation of three
"To wait on Masters with ultimatum."
"Hear, hear!" "Second the motion," said the crowd;
And Tom was given the doubtful honor
Of being made prominent in a strike.

Just then "Big Ben" within easy distance
Rang out loud and clear its tuneful warning:

"Lin lan lon lone,
"Lone lin lan lon;
"Lon lan lin lone;
"Lone lan lin lon."

Then, marveling at its own levity,
Began to boom forth noon's sombre opposite.
Earnestly the tones reverberated
Until each grim beat became sepulchral:

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

One—there are echoes of fear in that throb;
Two—or is sorrow thus solemnly pealing?
Three—now dim shapes take the place of each sob,
Four—and distinct to the cadence are reeling;
Five—hear them shudder—*Six*—haggard and stark—
Seven—to demons they turn in the dark.
Eight—what a hailstorm of chatter and chaff,
Nine—as they chuckle and rattle and laugh;
Ten—but again all is sorrow and tears;
Eleven—and heaven re-echoes with fears.

Black silences follow,
Each Death Warning Hollow,
Till Midnight's weird passing with portent imperial,
Is finished when *Twelve* rolls its accents funereal.

The men stood spellbound, till Tom's cheery voice
Turned the omen to good by remarking:
"Let that be the last of the old day, lads;
"From this beginning may a new day dawn."

Then as he turned from bidding them Godspeed
Annie, his wife, met him at the threshold.

"Bless you, my lass; I knew you'd wait:
"I felt you listening to me. Come in dear
"And I'll soon have the kettle a-boiling
"And you shall have some tea for your reward."

But when they entered together, he found
To his amazement the tea ready drawn,
And Annie wreathed in smiles at his pleasure.

"You are a treasure indeed," he whispered,
As he tenderly bent down and kissed her.

But Tom might well be proud of his helpmeet.
Annie Smith was one of the type scarce seen
Outside of old England. Saucy and pert
And sweet as a daffodil or primrose
Yet pure as the sainted lily. Her eyes
Were like the blue of heaven wherein we look
To receive inspiration in sorrow.
She was such a girl as sons of Albion
Battling abroad with the foes of Empire,
Or struggling at home with the imps of Mammon,
Sore discouraged—aye, cowed—by barriers
And oppression, have but to remember
To grow brave again with the remembrance.
And as Annie stepped out for a moment
To again put the parlor in order
Tom wondered how on earth he had managed
To exist in the old days without her.

Around him on every side he saw
The results of her work and contriving—
Not a corner in their four-roomed dwelling
But gave proofs of her prowess as housewife;
In the kitchen the pots and pans, as bright
As the face of their mistress, were in rows
On arrangements that he had constructed;
While the cook stove and table and floor
Told of no end of cleaning and scrubbing.

But the dining room even spoke louder.
For cushions and tidies and rag matting
And doylies of drawn work—that puzzled one,
So wonderfully intricate were they—
Were everywhere in evidence. Mottoes,
Such as "Do Right and Fear Not," "Love at Home,"
"Procrastination is the Thief of Time,"

Hung in appropriate places in frames
That she had coaxed him to make. Holders, too,
For every imaginable purpose—
Each purpose being particularly known
Only to her—were attached to the wall.

In the parlor, that sanctum sanctorum,
Kept dark through the week to save carpet,
Were stowed all the family valuables.
It was there that his savings had vanished.
Why, for instance, on the well papered wall
Hung two lovely landscape views that had cost—
Without stopping to mention the mirror—
Five whole guineas themselves. On the table
Five poets,—in padded leather binding,—
And a silver clasped family bible
Vied with the rich green cover beneath them
For notice from strangers. Like driven snow
Were the curtains whose patterns fantastic
Filtered the Sunday light. On the mantel,
Archly decked with the fanciest of laces,
Stood the clock that his fellows had given him
On the day he was wed. While each large piece—
As the sofa and table and whatnot—
Were such, at Annie's thoughtful suggestion,
That in case of a sudden emergency
The room could be changed to a sleeping place.

But it was in the bright little bedroom
That delicate taste quite outshone itself.
It was there that her filial virtue
Had placed in linen-covered cardboard frames
The pictures of their parents. Hand worked flowers
Were strewn around each furrowed countenance
While sprigs of evergreen encircled all.
Across from these, in loyal, honored place,

Fair Alexandra's even features beamed—
A happy index to the spot she holds
In British hearts and humble British homes.
The bed, with counterpane of purest white,
And pillow shams—held up by patent springs
Unseen that made one think they stood alone
Upon their crisp, frilled edges—and beneath,
Fat pillows, balmy with their cleanliness;
Enticed to slumber and the sweetest dreams.

Till Tom, as he thought of these luxuries,
Remembered what he said in committee
About his home being a palace
And was sorry he had not talked stronger.

But hush! his wife has returned; and the tea
Is poured out steaming hot, in dainty cups
That belong to dishes Annie received
As the wedding remembrance most cherished.
They had come from the chum of her childhood
And oh, how she treasured that set! Not one
Of its eighty-six pieces were broken,
Although used constantly for six long months.
And now they sit in the good old fashion
Of England, sipping the cheerful potion
And whispering fond words of endearment.
The strike, and all other troublesome thoughts,
Are carefully and prayerfully banished,
And the couple grow confiding as doves.

And why should they not be glad? thought Annie,
Was she not soon to become a Mother!
She knew it; and so did Tom; and the bliss
Was the most profound she had ever known.

Woman's life is a series of changes—
So distinct and sudden and peculiar—
That man's life is not a comparison.
First she is a child with a child's fondness
For baubles;—innocent and oblivious
Of sex she wanders through gardens of flowers.

Then she becomes a girl with a knowledge
Born of instinct; and clear in her vision
An ideal is raised and perfected:
She will keep herself so holy and pure
And will become so accomplished that men
Will bow down to worship her excellence,
But she'll be careful to keep far aloof,
Till the noblest and worthiest has come;
And then, after he has wooed and been tested
In some most romantic manner, she will kneel
And love him forever. Then, if God wills,
She will bear him children—so sweet and fair
That only angels may peer them; and she
Will train them so truly and with such care
That the boys will grow brave like their father:
And the girls even more pure than herself.
But when her ideal is at its highest
And time is full for realization
She finds, to her disappointment, that men
Do not bow and worship as she had dreamed,
And but faintly distinguish her virtues.

When therefore one man does come along
Who, alone of them all, respects her
As she had aimed to be respected,
Love for him dawns like a revelation
And a new period begins.

The loved one
May fit the ideal as a circle fits
A square, but, the plain projecting corners
Are that much in favor of the lover.
Oh, what a paragon he is! His voice,
His carriage, his glances, are open volumes
Where, to her, his perfections are blazoned.
With sacrifices, impossible to man,
She now adapts herself with all her thoughts
And ambitions gladly to suit his whim:
Even her most sacred hope of offspring
Has been disturbed by love. Another's wish
Lights warm desire for special attributes.

And then if she has been true, comes wifehood
Changing, with its strange ecstasy, her life
And her estimation of her lover.
Now she is safely wed for weal or woe;—
Surely that is the sum of earthly bliss?
But no! behind the rose there's still a thorn;
A secret pang stabs wifely happiness—
A fear that makes her blush. Is this life pure?
She asks, and is not wholly satisfied,
Till the next period puts doubt at end;
Then her heart beats with joy unspeakable.

Maternity—the hope of all her years—
Is at hand. She is not barren. Her lord
Will now be bound by a tie much stronger
Than that of will. He is reinstated.
A baby—blessed be that Providence
Who deemed her worthy of such an honor.
Her very joy is the unfailing proof
Of her purity. The poor fallen one,
Whose lust and unwise trust brings her thus far

Without a husband, is torn by chagrin
And disgrace and shame; till the same cause
Softening the true woman into further love
And tenderness, so rends the unfortunate,
That she stoops to murder to hide her woe.

Yes, this was Annie's secret. And her joy
Was only different in sex than Tom's.
His every act was tenderness itself.
Her great importance shone in his homage.
It was a new reason for life; a spur
More powerful than a raise in wages,
And perhaps a cause of tonight's remarks
About posterity. At all events
'Twas why he now rose and turned the house plants
With their flat sides to face the morning sun,
For that anticipates his wife's wish
To have her hobbies grow symmetrical.

But it is getting late and they retire
To rest. Yet ere they fall asleep, they talk
About the delegates; and of their wives;
And of Tom's speech—which Annie said she liked—
And of the monster strike that now is on:
But in their sanguine state and trust in Right
They little dream what striking means for them.

PART II

POVERTY

"CAN you let me have two pounds on this watch?"
Said a seedy looking ill-fed workman,
Who crossed the threshold of a Strand pawn-shop,
And laid on the counter his watch and chain
With its silver charm as he spoke the words.

"Two pounds," said the broker with a hoarse laugh,
"Is it a Waterbury?"

The insult

Would have cost the jester dearly if made
Three months ago: but Tom—for it was Tom—
Had learned to eat humble pie in silence
While his pocket was empty. "No it's not!"
Said he, "Two years ago it was the best
"Silver watch the maker, from whom I bought it,
"Had in stock, and with the chain and locket
"Cost me five guineas. It cost another
"To have that face photographed in the lid;
"But I suppose the picture of my wife
"Is of little value to outsiders—
"No matter how much it may be to me."

"I'll let you have twelve shillings if you like."
And the broker turned away carelessly.

"Twelve shillings, eh?" and Tom grew indignant
"You're all alike I see. My little home
"For which I have toiled and struggled is now
"In wreck and ruin. Half of its knickknacks,
"And that half that was far the most costly,
"Is now in the hands of brokers. One-sixth

"Of the cost of the goods within a year
"Would cover my receipts as their value.
"So far the vague hope of change in fortune—
"A belief in a brighter tomorrow—
"Has urged me to accept without grumbling
"The pittance passed out in such mockery;
"For, thought I, as I took it, redemption
"Will come that much easier; but to-day
"My wife lies moaning in all the perils
"Of childbirth. There is not a bite to eat
"In my cupboard—much less a doctor's fee—
"For mercy's sake be just and remember
"The treatment you'd like. Give me at least
"One pound if you cannot give me the two."

But in vain are appeals to sympathy;—
To resist is the pawnbroker's business.
"Twelve shillings is all I will loan. If you
"Do not like that you can leave it."

And Tom

In his dire necessity takes the cash
So unworthily proffered. "Wait awhile,"
He muttered in anguish, "and I'll warrant
"That brute will remember my misfortune."

Half the money is spent on his way home
For the dainties his wife will most relish.
"Poor little woman," he thinks. "What a shame
"To have to bear children in poverty;
"Oh, what a fool I was to leave myself
"Thus unprovided." And tortured in soul
With a man's greatest humiliation,
Tom sought the bedside of Annie. A neighbor,
Who herself was the mother of children,

And had volunteered in emergency,
Held a babe for the father's inspection
As he approached. On the couch behind her
Lay the heroine pallid but smiling;

"A boy, Tom, a boy it is. God is good.
"He has given us just what we wanted."

Tom kissed her again and again and praised
His progeny with all the flattering art
Of a father on such an occasion.
But the secret chagrin in his bosom
Would out, strive as he may to conceal it:
"I'm sorry old girl that your worthiness
"Must be but so scantily rewarded."
"Oh, Tom, you are not to blame," said Annie.
"Cheer up; there will soon be a reckoning.
"When the strike is over and won, we'll grow
"All the happier for having suffered."

"Tonight is a meeting of delegates
"Is it not, old fellow? Go and cheer them.
"There are many need cheer worse than we do.
"Let your light shine with brightness among them;
"For 'tis strange when we strive to cheer others
"We ourselves get the comfort we're giving.
"The Masters are having their day. Fight on
"And our day will come. Even at the worst
"There is one joy they cannot take from us."
And she turned to caress their new treasure.

Tom wanted to remain by the bedside;
But, since she insisted, her wish was his:
Especially at a time like the present.
So off he went to committee and found
Its attendance grown sparser than ever.

The Chairman and Secretary were there,
And some six or seven of the others,
Who hailed Tom's tardy entrance to their midst
With unusual symptoms of pleasure.
The meeting had been dull; such blue reports
Of seeming irretrievable mistakes—
Of odds so very insurmountable—
Had been detailed by nearly ev'ry man,
That Tom's appearance with his sturdy sense
And firm belief that all must end in good
Was like a tonic.

His ready insight
Took in the situation at a glance.
The pinched and haggard faces of the men
Spoke eloquent of care. Annie was right—
Perhaps some needed comfort more than they.
And so he listened to the different tales
Of how the Masters had again combined;
And starving men grown fearful of the end
Were flocking back like pigeons to their shame;
How people who were neutral in the strife
Were taking up the case against the men;
And how the very papers through the land—
Those watch-dogs of the Nation's liberty—
Were filling up their columns with abuse
Of such as tried to thwart the Masters' plans,
Accusing all of treason who but strove
To bring about a freedom worth the name.

With articles inspired by lust of gold
(The Masters advertised but not the men)
They claimed that England's loss of foreign trade
Was due entirely to the strikers' stand;
And with "I-told-you-sos" of skilled untruth
They cited German increase as a proof

Till Tom could barely sit to hear them out
And when at last he got a chance to speak
He did it with a gusto full of power :

“And so we’re traitors to our country, lads,
“Because forsooth while fighting for our right,
“The Germans take by stealth some paltry trade?
“Shame on the Briton that can raise the cry,
“And may he go to Germany and live.
“If German serfs must work twelve hours a day
“And harness up their women to the plow
“And fight their country’s battles with a sword
“Of tyranny behind them as a goad;
“Should men who’d fain *be* men do just the same?

“If when we meet conditions such as these
“And to compete must condescend to fall
“And lose our British birthright for a palm,
“That shows we’re greater slaves than Germans are;
“Who is there in our midst than to submit
“Would not much rather die?

We might in turn
“Exclaim with equal force that since our queen
“And her advisers in the Government
“Cannot compel the trade to stop with us,
“By subsidizing Masters to give in,
“Then Magna Charta and brave Hampden’s fight
“Are only idle incidents at best;
“And we’ll exchange and bring a Kaiser here.
“‘Be Patriotic!’ let us scorn the thought
“If slavery for trade is what it means.
“Our fight is on the line of Britain’s past;
“We try to shuffle off a tyrant’s grasp—
“A tyrant that makes poor not only us

"But all our Nation from the Monarch down.
"Is not our Sovereign lady—bless her heart—
"By far a greater ruler with her throne
"Backed up by freemen and not freemen's shades?

"Though Persia's wealth made envious nations weep
"Her half a million slaves could not avail,
"When freedom-loving Greece in freedom's cause
"Sent twenty thousand *men* to Marathon.
"That soldiers, forced, one tyrant then found out
"Were but a prey for soldiers, free, to kill.
"Yet that same Greece with all her martial fame;
"Her brilliant aeons of surpassing power;
"At length succumbed, in spite of warning voice,
"Allured by Phillip's gold to her long doom.

"But we need not go back to Ancient Greece
"For instances to nerve us on our way;
" 'Tis all too modern since by baser lust—
"A lust that would enslave its own free blood—
"That half a continent with its brave sons
"Was lost to Britain and the British throne.
"Vain, vain the voice of Pitt—his glorious life—
"His years of unmatched statesmanship—all vain—
"The gilded monster feels no single check
"And throttles kings to sate its greed for gold.

"Yet that same race that took its life from ours—
"Though builded, as it seemed, on freedom's base—
"In its short hist'ry yields us further proof
"That slavery is the rust on freedom's steel.
"The working North took up its righteous arms
"And said, we'll blot a curse from out our land!
"The South, indignant, said we bought the curse,
"And now we'll fight to keep it hand to hand.

"And so they measured swords and for a time
"E'en Lincoln shuddered for the upright cause.
"But there was One above who saw the strife
"And soon the slave-weak South was humbled low;
"Till grown more thoughtful by the lesson dear
"A new South rises from the ashes strong.
"Not so the winning North; her honest pride
"Fanned by the victory into pompous show,
"Now takes fair virtue's badge as Virtue's self
"And owns allegiance to cold glittering gold.

"His Majesty, King Cash, gains daily sway
"And Wall street is subserved on cringing knee;
"It is not 'is it right?' but 'does it pay?'
"That guides the giddy craft o'er trait'rous sea.
"They've had their Washington. They've had their
Grant.

"Who—who will be the Joshua now called
"To break the golden image and to lead
"His Israel from a wilderness of guile?

"Let Trade go where it will. When Equal Rights
"Has distributed wealth where it belongs,
"And starving multitudes and titled thieves
"Are banished with our vict'ry from the land;
"I'll wager England with her English race
"Will not take long to win back what's her own."

"Hear, hear!" the listening delegates exclaim,
And brighter grow their weary sunken eyes;
'Tis hard to summon even just applause—
For hungry men need food to grow enthused;
So, when this outburst meets Tom's stop for breath,
'Twas inspiration to begin again:

"Who is our special tyrant?" blind men ask—
"This so-called leech that sucks our country's blood?"

"Alas, the problem is too easy solved.
"The tyrant, whom we battle, is the man
"Who can grow wealthy while his workmen starve,
"Who can grow learned and yet see the means
"Toil cheerless year on year without a chance
"To e'en discover that they are depraved.
"This fits most Masters and a three-months' fight
"But proves the theory that we have been wronged;
"Since with a strength of hundreds to their one
"We have not yet depleted all their store.
"But we will yet succeed, for *right is might*
"And e'en if tardy must at last prevail.

"They call us socialists. If that's the name
"That is applied to men who scorn to kneel
"And kiss the hands that rob them of their gains,
"Then socialists we are and God be praised."

"Hear, hear!" said one of the gauntest present,
"Long live socialism!" and Tom went on:

"Fanatics, traitors, socialists,—they shout,
"And in the clamor hope to sneak away;
"But we are not misled by hollow sounds;
"We know exactly who and what we are.
"Fanaticism real ne'er lost a field;
"Great concentration is its better name;
"So if fanatics, we have won our cause;
"Since those thus nicknamed call success their own.
"But traitors, never! And we hurl that back
"To fit with better grace a Master's brow.

“Who—who is more a traitor than the knave
“That undermines and saps his country’s strength;
“And for a throne upheld on shoulders broad;
“And laws devised to benefit the whole;
“Replaces systems where the crown means force,
“Protecting property though people die;
“And legislation is a legal code,
“That from their victims saves the unjust few?
“Breathes there a man with conscience and a brain
“Can say from history past the rich are meek
“And that a millionaire, Utopian like,
“Will legislate to minimize his power?

“This three-months’ strike has given us time to think;
“And I have used the time with eager heart:
“But thought has all begun and ended, too,
“At these two queries: In a just God’s plan
“How came the worker to be void of wealth?
“And he who has it to be void of toil?
“Till late I see an answer through the haze
“That daily grows and satisfies my mind.”

“In honest times the Master was a steward;
“The shop, the tools, the ground belonged to all.
“An equal interest—a share of stock—
“The Master owned like every other man.
“His task ’tis true was lighter, but, to urge
“A thrifty saving of the gains of all,
“His profits were the same—so justice aimed—
“And gave a spur to universal toil.

“But lo! the steward grows vain. His easier task
“Now makes him fearful that it may not last:
“Dishonesty and vanity are kin;
“So, in his idle moments through the years

"He steals a piece from each man's little pile.
"The workers never dream that one so sleek,
"Could use soft, tapered fingers in that way;
"And they applaud the genius that he shows
"To make his pile grow bigger than their own.

"Encouraged by their ignorance of guile—
"For workers are the noblest type of men—
"He smiles and with a pomp of greater skill
"Makes heavier and heavier the toll.
"Then, like deception all the ages through,
"He preaches virtue thus to hide his theft;
"And points to false accounts they could not read
"E'en had they been the fairest of the fair.
"For while mistrust is hedged about deceit,
"To those who need it most it never comes;
"And unsuspecting truth wont even learn
"The arts that falsehood learns to make in vain.

"Thus on the steward stole till at the last—
(Credulity like flattery overturns)—
"He quite believed he really did deserve
"A tithe of all the gains beside his own:
"So through the ages were the workers robbed
"And made the puppets of designing rogues.
"As master this false steward may fight sincere;
"And think his father's will gave him his power;
"But no clear title ever came by theft;
"And no one can bequeath what's not his own."

"That's right!" "It's ours!" "They stole it!" and the
men
Applaud this portion with especial vim;
While Tom's mind wanders to his little house,

And rests a moment on his day old son,
And p'raps anticipating—thus went on :

“But thanks to friends of toil and their first fruit—
“*Act's* ardent seed evolved from *Thought's* deep
womb—

“We are at last awaking to our loss.

“So let us first be just. Let labor own

“The debt it owes to friends—to native gems :

“For such are all those men whose marble busts

“Make yonder Abbey sacred ; and whose fame

“Has shed a sparkling lustre o'er mankind.

“The poets—statesmen—artists—and the kings

“Who wrestled truth to rouse a nobler life ;—

“Their's is a labor that toil needs must own,

“Since 'tis the halo of the toiler's goal.

“The world's wise workers work that they may gain

“A Leisure that will help them help their race ;

“Experience that will be a stepping stone,

“For later workers to step higher still.

“And mark you this, the truer to the root

“Toil's blossoms are, the longer do they bloom ;

“The plant that leans for shelter from the storm,

“Or never turns its back upon the sun,

“Will soon become one-sided ; and behold

“The side to which it leans is where it falls.

“The men whom ages honor are the men

“Who follow with the poet this ideal :”

““The applause of listening senates to command

The threats of pain and ruin to despise

To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land

And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes.’

"Compare such laurelled lives with lives of men,
"Who by their combination wage black war
"On all the interests that the mass holds dear;
"And by such objects, though so far apart,
"We're taught how heroes live and cowards die.

"For they are cowards; there is no mistake;
" 'Tis cowards take advantage of the weak.
"In fact they're even worse; they're like the fiend
"Who lives beneath a money-lender's sign.
"One takes our little treasures into pawn,
"And with the smile some stewards are wont to give,
"When we had hoped enough to buy us bread,
"He hesitates o'er what will buy us stone.
"The other, like the pawnman, waits his turn,
"And when the worker comes in direst need,
"He says: 'If you will slave for such a sum
" 'And promise never, never to combine;
" 'And that you'll always kneel when I am near,
" 'And kiss the ground I walk on if desired;
" 'I may consent to own you after trial.'
"And then he spreads abroad the loud report
"His men and he are mutually agreed."

"Hear, hear!" the starving listeners shout aloud.
This is a sally that has struck straight home.
That Tom is but the mouthpiece shows too plain
They all had been through mill too like his own.

"The world admits the Pawnman is a snare;
"A sepulchre for all that men admire;
"But when it comes to Master that's a name
"That does not so expose its rotten core.
"Yet though the little pug fine ladies lead
"May be decked out in cape and ribbons blue;

"It is but dog at best and prone to sniff
"And misbehave and show its hidden fangs."

"In poverty and ignorance— two states
"For which this doubtful monster is to blame—
"The workman is coerced and duped by lies;
"And when perchance he begs a living wage
"His Master groans; increase would ruin all.
"But that same day from snowy peak to peak
"Your so-called pauper's name resounds on high:
"He has subscribed a fortune to some list
"Some royal magnate has been pleased to head.

"Then comes the knighthood—for he paid its price—
"Now see Sir Croesus strut and peacock-proud
"Boast free not of his head but of his tail.
"Ah charity, shy nymph! first seen at home;
"A knighthood for thy crown were crown of thorns.
"If as wealth grew each toiler got his share,
"Grudged lists—grudged parish aid would be unknown.
"We fain would pay our way. We hate drugged alms
"Reluctantly we take the miser's mite.
"That which we do not earn and yet accept
"Must soon or late bring high flown hopes to grief.
"Men want their own given to them as of right,
"And not as bounty from unworthy hands.
"But wait, my lads, we'll pierce the sheepish cloak,
"And show the ugly teeth by name disguised."

"Hear, hear!" again the men repeat and throw
Their ragged caps aloft to show their glee.

"Some sentimental creature, lulled to sleep
"By laureateship or other gilded pill,

“Wrote down to quell reform: ‘What is, is right;’
“And thoughtless thousands take it word for word.
“Some other dreamers hoping long reward
“When Masters are obtaining their deserts,
“Quote Holy Writ their slavery to prolong,
“And sigh the Bible tells us to obey.
“While in their meekness they forget to think
“That white slaves have some rights as well as black.
“But cant or Holy Writ, or Heaven itself
“Can never make wrong right without a move.
“And that it’s wrong we too can glibly quote.
“We read our Shelley’s or our Burns’s when lo,
“In every magic line some spirit lurks
“That spurs our lagging gait to nobler strides:

“ ‘If I’m designed yon lordling’s slave;
By nature’s law designed;
Why was an independent wish
E’er planted in my mind?’

“Ah, there’s a query that makes tyrants pale,
“And Masters would pooh-pooh it—if they could.
“But in its asking we have cast a coat
“That honor will not let us wear again.
“E’en from the Book whence all would license take
“We get a dogma that towers mountains high;
“All—all admit its truth and every law
“That shadows half its greatness is sublime.
“And if employers took it into heart,
“And for the future let it be their guide,
“We could forgive their questionable wealth,
“Nor think that we had yielded it as spoil.
“That dogma says: to brother do ye like
“As you would have your brothers do to you;
“And in its practice there is peace and love,
“And where it reigns is harmony divine.”

The strikers, to an echo, cheered this truth;
But half oblivious, Tom heard something more—
For, as he ceased, "Big Ben" began to toll
And doleful tell of midnight's lonely hour.
He could not help the tremor that he felt
But hastily resumed to fight the fear:

"A hero's least used weapon is his tongue;
"No victory worth the winning comes with ease;
"Who fights with speeches only loses grip;
"Not e'en Demosthenes could make them tell.

"I put my savings in the common purse
"When first the strike demanded ready funds;
"And bitterly at times the thought has come
"If any one now needs them I am he:

"But in my hour of need I can't forget
"The higher call of millions yet unborn,
"Till, as I think how serious failure is—
"How very grand the goal that we may gain,
"I grow inspired, and if such act availed,
"And sacrifice of one would win the day,
"Time's pages would show freedom written plain
"With dearest blood from out my inmost core.

"Then let us stick together and to Right;
Coax every fainting fellow to be true;
Trafalgar's glory looms upon our sight,
And whispers to be brave is England's due.

"Starvation for a victory may seem dear;
Bare promise is poor substitute for food;
But better men have died for scantier cheer;
And what we gain is for our children's good.

"Stay with the struggle to the end hope craves;
Stay with it though 'tis death that comes so slow;
Since Britain's banner says we'll ne'er be slaves;
Let's die, if die we must to prove it so."

PART III

DESPAIR

"Tom, Tom—Oh Tom! our little one is ill;
"The doctor, quick, or else we'll lose our all;
"That cruel baby farm—but hurry, lad,
"Or else the child will die before you go."

"But Annie, lass, what use is there to try?
"A doctor wants his wage as well as we;
"And to ensure he gets it will not come
"Till part at least is paid upon his fee.
"I have not got a penny to my name;
"Our very last resource is now in pawn;
"A doctor is a prize beyond our power;
"Our infant, too, must go if go it will."

Then, Annie, with a mother's deathless love,
A love that even wifehood can't appall;
Scarce pauses when she hears their awful plight
But hands her badge of marriage to her lord.
Tom took the ring in silence. In his throat
A lump welled up that choked the slightest sound;
And from the ill lit room without a word
He passed into an outer, wider night.
He saw in this, her greatest sacrifice,
And loved the girl more dearly for the deed;
And through the heedless throng he hurried fast
To find a doctor that might save their child.

The day he bought the trophy came to mind,
With all its fairy promise and its joy;
One year ago today! Oh, what a change!
Oh, what an age of suffering intervenes!
Was he to blame? He could not quite decide;—
All outward signs would seem to say he was.

He had but followed conscience in his course
Yet conscience had prepared a prison cell :
For, but today, upbraiding at their work
Some men who had deserted from the strike
And in his righteous anger using words
That had incited them to take revenge ;
Their Master, more than glad for such a chance,
Had quick a warrant sworn for his arrest.
And that his errand now might sure be done,
He had to dodge each constable he met.

But he has managed to complete his task ;
And back he hurries to a once snug home
To wait there patiently the doctor's ease,
And hope that Annie's love was not in vain.
He found his wife in gloom upon her knees
Behind the pillow where the baby lay :
And hushed his step that he might not disturb
The prayer of anguish that she sent above.
A candle, flickering from an upturned box
Beside the naked couch, shows all too plain
The seamy side of strikes. But stronger proof
A vague, uncertain light in mercy hides.

But hist ! the doctor comes—his blund'ring steps
Resound with hollow harshness from the hall ;
He enters now, and, in a broken chair
Which Annie offers, sits beside the bed.
A serious look o'erspreads his thoughtful face,
And, holding in his own the tiny hand,
He peers into his watch, whose steady tick,
Despite their thumping hearts, the parents hear.

"How long has your poor child been in this state?"
The doctor asks and Annie hastes to say :

"I cannot tell you doctor, for you see
"Ten days ago I left it out to mind;
"My husband's out of work and we've been poor
"So when a chance to earn a shilling came
"I left the baby at a baby farm,
"And nursed a Master's child to buy mine clothes.
"The Master's wife disliked to nurse her babe;
"And as I could earn money in that way,
"And every other way I tried was vain,
"I took their infant at my own's expense.
"They told me that they'd let me visit mine
"Each Saturday if I should so desire;
"And though it went against the very grain
"I had to take their offer and be glad.

"Last week I found my baby growing thin—
"The matron said all babies thinned at first—
"I wanted then to take my child away
"But penury compelled another week.
"And when I went tonight that was the state
"In which I found our solace sent from God.
"Oh, Doctor! give me comfort in this hour
"And say there's hope to save it even now?"

With this appeal the mother, bathed in tears,
Leaned forward on the table for support;
Somehow her instinct told her all was vain;
And so she sobbed as though her heart would break.
Tom's head hung down. He could not even speak.
Within his breast the fiercest passion raged:
His Annie's grief—the doctor's hopeless face—
Were curses that he breathed against his foe.

"Poor woman," said the doctor, and his voice
Grew husky, for he too had lost a child;
"You found the baby just a bit too late;
"No skill can help you now—your child is dead."

Great grief is voiceless; and he slipped away
Unheard, unnoticed by the stricken pair;
He dared not linger; they were far beyond
Where he could stop or heal the stinging blow.
The glimmering candle burns itself to naught;
Grim darkness fills the cheerless room of death;
The mother's gulping sobs—the whispered hiss
Of Tom's black curses, are the only sounds.

Upon the pillow still the little corpse,
To Annie, seems enwreathed in crimson light;
She was the murderess of her own loved babe;
She robbed it of its food for filthy gold.
No other thought could drive that thought away;
And so she groans bereft of every balm;
While Tom can only think a Master's wife
Has been the means that brought his wife such woe;
He takes the baby's death with stoic's pride:
'Tis better for the boy to die than live;
For had he lived most like he'd have to serve
That other child the offspring of his foe;
And if it could usurp his baby's place
And seize that sacred fount, a mother's breast,
What hope was there for pity when the years
Would take away such seeming sure resource?

And as the hours dragged by his busy brain
Pictured the horrors of the gathering clouds;
His home a wreck, his wife a workhouse plug—
A criminal whose crime is being poor;—
The strike a failure; and himself in jail—
These were the prospects. For despite his shame,
His conquest over pride and willing toil,
To earn by selling matches, flowers and toys
And sweeping crossings, what they fain would eat;
His seedy looks had driven help afar:

A man grown gaunt is like enough a cheat—
A boo-man that not only children fear;—
For at the best he's sure to hope for alms.
And so he found in all great London town,
So few kind hearts to pity his sad plight,
That, though he swept from early morn till night,
He could not even earn their scanty rent.
Within his pocket now he held the note,
That told him he must leave his bare walled home.

His conscience tells him he has done the right;
But oh, the awful price such conscience cost!
A leader of the strike he had no chance
To take again, e'en if he would, his place;
The Masters had it in for such as he—
For well they knew he had it in for them.

But hush! again he hears his Annie sob;
"Poor Girl," he thinks and creeps to where she is,
And with his arms around her whispers low:
"Come lass, let's leave this more than empty room."

His whisper sounds unearthly. But she heeds
And wonders that he cares to cheer her now.
She does not question even where they'll go
For anywhere is better far than here.
So, silent, to the bed she quickly steals
To tenderly uplift its lifeless load;
Which folding tight within her threadbare shawl;
From out the chamber deftly follows Tom.
Both shudder at the echoes they arouse
And bolt the door to shut the spectres in;
Then with one aim, to blot it from their mind,
They leave what once they thought a peerless home.

Away into the night; along the Thames;
Now through the Courts where darkness reigns supreme;
Now back to the Embankment where they rest;
Then on through crowded thoroughfares again;
Above, a lowering sky in blackness looms—
The still before a storm is in the air;
The hours wax late and hucksters hurry home
And thank their stars they yet may cheat the rain.

But Tom and Annie see no warning sign;
Their misery propels them on and on;
Now in a square they sit and nurse their grief;
Then up again to pace deserted streets.
Fate puts Westminster Bridge upon their way,
And as they start to cross its vacant length;
A livid flash and then a rumbling roll
Foretell too late the nearness of the storm.
Another flash—a louder nearer roar—
And then above them bursts the angry sky;
While blasts of blinding rain their garments pierce,
And in a moment drench them to the skin.
They stop beside a lamp post on the bridge,
Which breaks the blasts but offers poor retreat;
It simply serves to flatter and deceive,
And hold them from the shelter elsewhere found.
Tom shields his wife by standing next the wind;
And she in turn, oblivious of herself,
Holds close her burden to most sheltered spot;
And strives to save her infant though 'tis dead.

And thus they stand while loud the storm king shrieks:
The few who pass them by scarce turn to see,
But hurry on, a home before their eye
'Tis worth while facing e'en a storm to gain.



“Tom now lost hope
And groaned within his soul *There is no God.*”

And such a storm. Wild snake-tongued lightning thrusts
With savage fury leap across the sky;
While every leap is followed by a crash
Whose mutt'ring rattle rasps the trembling air.
And in the stillness just before each peal,
The belching heavens pour such torrents down,
That whirlpools eddy on the broad, smooth bridge
In madd'ning strife to join the stream below;
And as belated cabbies, in their haste,
Forget all law and gallop through the slush;
The swirling wheels and horses' prancing hoofs
Send dirty splashes o'er the shivering pair.

But hark! the battle has again begun.
She how the thick clouds crack with living fire!
Was ever such a storm in London known?
Did Winter ever war like this before?
And Tom and Annie shudder as they crouch;
Within—without the same un pitying power.
Is this God's mercy for despairing souls?
Another crash—another deafening roar.
No babe—no home—no friend to offer work;
The strike a failure and their last coin gone;
Half starved; what wonder that Tom now lost hope
And groaned within his soul: *There is no God.*

The cruel flashes twisting through the sky,
Like golden serpents seem to squirm in scorn;
They look like Masters. How they mock his woe.
Who thwarts their awful strength can only die.

And then he mutters in the ceaseless din
While Annie crouches closer in her fear;
"The World's one only God is gold—base gold;
"With it the veriest fool has sovereign power;

"The halo that surrounds the man of wealth,
"No matter if he steals his shining store,
"Makes him an idol virtue stoops to praise,
"And worship while it licks the cloven paw.
"The man without this gold though he possess
"A hero's attributes must bend the knee,
"And offer at its shrine in sacrifice,
"His strength, his love of truth, his hope of heaven,—
"Aye, Ganges Mother like, his very child.
"If he resists behold the yawning cell ;"—
And Tom here pictures where he soon must be,—
And then reverts to what seems even worse ;
His Annie in a workhouse picking tow.

But as one storm begins to lose its force
Above the din another storm is heard ;
List to its laugh ! Why does the thunder cease ?
Oh for a crash to drown that brazen tune :

"Lin lon lan lone,
Lone lan lin lon ;
Lan lin lone lon ;
Lon lan lin lone."

'Tis twelve o'clock and "Big Ben" tolls the hour,
With swelling throb that makes each beat a scourge ;
Tom feels the strokes before they even strike,
And writhes beneath them—they recall the past.

"Oh Annie, let us end it all," he said ;
She did not speak but clutched her lifeless babe ;
Its little limbs were stiff—its face seemed ice—
And sent a chill throughout her wretched frame.

"Let's end it all and cheat them of their prey;
"We need not suffer torture any more;
"There is no death so dark as such a life."
And Annie by grim silence gave consent.

"Boom," sang Big Ben. "Curse on that ghastly bell!"
And then Tom stooped to kiss her ere they died;
And what a kiss—First love ne'er knew its heat,
As Tom upon her bloodless lips pressed his.
Oh how they suck each other's very soul,
And live long years of agonizing bliss,
To seal death's compact; not the first time sealed
In such a way—for kisses often kill.

"Boom"—but its echoes do not die away
Ere o'er the railing leap the hapless pair;
Tom's arm is 'round her as they take the plunge
While close between the two is held their child.

A splash! a gurgle from the sullen waves!
Was it the wind or was it Annie sighed?
The night watch toils across the silent bridge,
And hears Big Ben's last toll and thinks it sweet.

Now morn commences while the storm clouds stir;
See through yon crevice how that star shines clear!
The Thames flows onward, and to tell Tom's fate,
There's naught but circles hurrying to the sea.

* * * * *

But in that tune where Tom foreheard his doom,
Had he but listened with a happier ear,
He would have heard above Man's petty strife
This solemn message ringing through the air:

THE SONG THAT BIG BEN SINGS.

FROM my abode
In freedom's pile,
I am the goad
To honest toil;

I tell the time
Day in—day out,
My lonely chime
Is freedom's scout;

I dare not leave
My daily task,
Not e'en to cleave
The tyrant's mask;

For when I cease
To tell the hour
Then will increase
The tyrant's power;

So here I toll
From year to year,
The sentry soul
That skulker's fear.

No longer seek
With worthless gold,
To crush the weak
Or cow the bold,

My throbbing tones
Are full of pain;
They echo groans
Of starving men.

I am the wail
Of helpless poor;
My tireless tale
Tells vengeance sure.

I echo, too,
A Gruesome knell,
For those who woo
The arts of hell.

All those who come
To mar my laws;
My doleful thrum
In warning awes.

But those who try
To do the right,
Need never fly
My thund'ring might.

Be careful all!
The time will come
When I will call
And you'll be dumb.

HELEN
A STORY OF FOUR PARTINGS

BEGUN IN NEW YORK
IN 1895

ADVERTISEMENT

IT is melancholy to have to say in such a century of progress as the one in which we live that the following story is more than imaginary. Yet as a matter of fact there is no incident here related that was not grounded on newspaper paragraphs.

Justice—even in the highest of human courts—depends all too largely on the ability of one's lawyer and the sort of health that one's judge is enjoying. Would that it were otherwise. Yet what have we a right to expect when Society accepts with good natured forgetfulness such excuses as "Oh he's only sowing his wild oats," yet on the other hand holds its skirts from contamination when it meets such a victim as "Helen."

INTRODUCTION

IN penitent agony, gasping for breath,
A Magdalene lies on her pillow of death;
Above her no roof hides the fathomless sky;
Around her a crowd stands with wondering eye—
Now surging—now vying to see the white face
Of one who so early had fallen from grace.
Yet she heeds not the mob or its curious stare;
She heeds not its strife in her struggle for air;
She has done with the world and its worry and woe;
She has done with the causes that laid her so low:
Away from the haunts of her shame and her sin;
She looks up at heaven, its mercy to win.
And heaven rewards her: before her glad eye
The angels are hovering to bear her on high;
The jeers and the pity and oaths of the throng
Are but notes in her ear of celestial song.
“Who is she?” “What’s happened?” the queries fast fly;
“A prostitute dying,” new voices reply;
“Is that all?” say some and continue their way;
While others, more curious, as vulgarly stay.
But no! it is not all: That fast fleeting soul
Is one of too many to reach the same goal;
By well beaten path; o’er the same deadly snare;
Through circumstance, cruelty, falsehood, despair.
But soft! It is over: Life’s last sands are run;
Now Death has completed what man had begun.
May He whose wise purposes left her to fall
Nor struck down the wretch who beguiled her of all,
Now point her a place in the happiest sky—
For this is her story as whispered on high:

PART I

THE PARTING FROM HOME

"ALL aboard for the West; for the West all aboard;"
And the engine's shrill shriek lends its force to each word.
Then the swish of the steam as it coughs itself free,
And the clang of the bell as it dances in glee,
Are the sounds that are heard as a train took its way
From a village that close by the proud Hudson lay.
"Goodbye and God bless you," the old Merchant said,
As his lips on her forehead he hurriedly laid;
"And remember, my child, if your hopes turn awry—
"If the West does not always respond to your sigh;
"Come back to the old home—you're welcome again."
Then hastily beat his retreat from the train.
The girl's streaming eyes followed fast down the car;
And then from the side watched him gaze from afar;
Till in distance the Merchant and other kind friends,
Who had come to get one last good shake of her hands,
Were lost in the vista, and Helen sank back
To muse on her past as she sped o'er the track;
To muse and to weep, though by duty upborne—
For she left it by choice without hope of return.

* * * * *

2

It was back in the sixties, his business complete,
While strolling through town ere his train left at eight,
That a Merchant one day, in miraculous wise,
Was attracted and charmed by a pair of bright eyes.
They were those of a baby not yet three years old
In the top story room of a Poor Orphans' Fold;
And so like the eyes of a dear little boy
Whose death had late riven his hearth of its joy—
That entering the Fold ere his train time had come
He made all arrangements to take Baby home.
To take little Helen so dainty and sweet,

So credulous, earnest and free from deceit,
Whose mother, a widow by penury pressed,
Had placed in the Fold ere she left for the West;
Renouncing all claim to the child she had borne
"For its own sake," she said as she left it forlorn.
And now as the Merchant in kindness bent down
To fondle and toy with her tresses of brown,
The baby returned his caresses sincere,
And gladly went with him unconscious of fear.

3

It was love at first sight with the Merchant and child;
She was drawn as by force to his manner so mild,
Not stern and presumptive—Not haughty nor vain,
Without that hauteur which the wealthy attain,
He was gentle and kind and though dignified, still
Grew playful and friendly with children at will.
Success had been his; from his earliest youth
He had shown a marked fitness for trade; 'tis a truth
That the merchant as well as the poet or king
Is born to his calling; when to business boys cling—
Then give them full rein and their future is sure.
So fared it in this case; though honest and pure
His dealings turned everything touched into gold;
And high among honors his name was enrolled;
Well read and well versed in the World's wily ways;
Accomplished, abstemious, uninjured by praise;
The instinct of Helen, that trusted his worth,
And went with him quickly in innocent mirth,
Was an index to be before aught else preferred;
For a child's intuition but seldom has erred.

4

His wife was a woman of similar parts,
Refined and accomplished in womanly arts;

She won every eye by her beauty of form,
She won every heart by her lady-like charm;
She was gentle to all and the poor learned to love
The one whom all pitiful stories could move;
While the rich made her actions a guide for their own,
And where she might lead she was seldom alone.
Not forward or flashy—Not backward or dense—
Nor erratic—or odd—but a woman of sense;
She was all that the wife to the husband should be—
An adviser, a solace, a helpmeet; and he
Grew daily her debtor, till loving and loved,
True marriage a blessing they constantly proved.
One beautiful child had made union complete;
A boy who bade fair to be noble and great.
But the parents—too happy—were envied on high;
The child they had worshipped was born but to die;
And though months had passed since the baby had gone
It seemed to the mother a week had scarce flown.

5

And so when the Merchant with Helen arrived;
She pitied the infant of parents deprived;
And winning quick trust by a motherly care,
Ensconced her at "Redfern" its comforts to share.
At "Redfern," the boast of the country around;
A home where all joys of refinement were found;
Where art vied with nature to offer content,
And all of its choicest of ornaments lent;
Where the cottage, a model of architect's skill,
Surrounded by orchard and crowning a hill,
Was lost 'mid a covering of ivy and vine
In whose clinging tendrils sweet roses recline:
Where meadows stretched off to the haze-hidden height,
Or yielded to pastures with cattle in sight;
Where sombre toned cow-bells and bleating of sheep,
Subdued by the distance, would dreamily creep,

To blend with the droning of diligent bees,
And singing of birds in the neighboring trees:
While Hudson close by in his majesty flowed,
And hallowed the charm of a faultless abode.

6

'Twas here Helen dwelt, and as years rolled along
Grew loving and lovely; her always blithe song
Was just what was needed for Redfern's perfection.
The past was forgot; by her guardian's direction
No mention was made of the Fold or her birth;
Nor action betrayed to detract from her worth.
The Merchant and wife were her father and mother;
The son they had lost was to her a lost brother.
And so growing older as Redfern's heiress;
Beneath the kind rule of a wise governess;
She took wondrous strides. Her great aptness to learn
Made mastering studies but matters of turn.
At last quite elated to college she went,
And there three industrious Winters were spent,
Till accomplished and learned in the Arts of her time:
Well read in the authors and poets sublime;
She returned to her home nothing loath you may ween,
O'er her girlish companions a positive queen:
Yet modest and kindly—her happiest parts,
But outward designs of the truest of hearts.

7

Such a beautiful maiden with impulses true,
Desirous the right course alone to pursue,
With a training so just 'neath the fostering care
Of a mother so gentle, so patient, so rare,
Of a father inured to the ways of the world,
With a future so bright and so useful unfurled;
Was it wonder that Helen society led?

That her comrades were proud of so brilliant a head?
That each home for miles gave its ready consent
To make her most welcome wherever she went?
That the aged and weak vied in calling her friend?
That the poor's grateful smiles showed their debt at
her hand?
That she shared all the secrets the village contained—
So strong was the faith that her earnestness gained?
Or that half the young men nursed the hopes in their
breast?
That they some day might win her—their idol con-
fessed?
And this the more possible seemed to each youth
Since alike to all comers—exciting no ruth—
Whatever her maidenly fancy might be
She showed that as yet she was heart whole and free.

8

But Fortune, too lavish,—nor smiling with stint
On commonest actions—is giving a hint
Of trial and trouble and danger to come:
For few lives can long escape Sorrow's chill gloom.
Fair Helen, till now unaware of her birth,
And taking more pride than was wise in the worth
Of those whom she deemed were her parents and kin,
Excited at length such an envious spleen,
In one who had posed as the family friend,
(Who supped at the table she now sought to rend
And knew the ward's story) she told her the tale;
And told it so harshly that trembling and pale
The girl sought the Merchant. But what could he say?
The secret was out and no words could allay
Poor Helen's distress; for despite good intent
His comfort but proved her of doubtful descent.
The shock was so sudden for weeks she lay ill,
Her life became vacant, unsettled her will.

We can doctor the pass of a ruffian's steel,
But the gash of the gossip is harder to heal.

9

As the time wore away, Helen, conquering pride,
Determined to advertise wisely and wide
For her parent—her mother: How strange and unreal
That word had become. Down her cheeks there would
steal

Great salt tears as she thought of it all. Alone—
Alone among strangers, a waif and unknown!
Though the Merchant and wife did their best to restore
The confident manner—the love as of yore,
Still she felt an outsider; their kindness hurt most.
It was charity only, it seemed to her cost.
Her mother she carefully traced from the East;
With each post returning her worry increased:
Perhaps she was dead and her search was in vain;
But youth always buoyant—grew hopeful again.
Perhaps she was poor, and the tears like a flood
Rained down o'er her cheeks for her own flesh and
blood;

Or p'raps she was sick and in lonely despair—
Was dying for want of a daughter's kind care;
Thus goaded, her search with new vim was inspired,
Till ended at length by the tidings desired.

10

"Her mother," she learned after long months had passed,
"Was now in a mining town out in the West.
"She had married again, but again had been left
"To battle alone, of her husband bereft.
"As a boarding-house keeper she made both ends meet,
"And earned for her household sufficient to eat."
So ran the short story that Helen was told:

But even this tale for her waiting consoled.
At once she decided, and pleading was vain,
To go to her mother—to start life again.
Her guardians were wealthy, nor needed her aid,
Their lot her extraction but helped to degrade;
But her mother was old and in need, she surmised,
Her place was beside her however despised;
To her strong sense of duty no course was made clear,
Save that which must drag her from all she held dear.
So she bade all the friends of her girlhood goodbye;
O'er the haunts of her childhood cast lingering eye;
And then came the parting that ended it all—
As westward the train took its way past recall.

PART II

THE PARTING FROM HUSBAND

In the West with its hustle and bustle and boom;
Its promise of wealth oft redeemed in the tomb;
Its glamour to all who adventure may seek;
Its lures for the hardy; its graves for the weak;
No wonder that Helen found everything strange;
That she was not prepared to encounter such change;
That the mountains around her looked threatening and
grim;

That the houses quite failed to match luxury's whim:
That her mother, grown used to a mining camp life—
To its dissolute men and its brawling and strife,—
Had lost all the culture her girlhood had known,—
Was coarse and repulsive to even her own,
And received the young girl, who had come to her roof
As a truant who needed not love—but reproof.
Yet Helen was plucky. Determined to stay,—
Her pride was not false or to fancy a prey—
She smothered her longings for friends in the East;
Nor would she return (though their pleadings in-
creased)

She would care for her mother and lighten her load;
And take all reproaches as trials from God.

2

But if her reception at home was unkind,
The camp made atonement that left her resigned.
A spinster, no matter her age or her class,
In a camp of rough miners is sure to surpass—
Since to them but few maidens are tempted to roam,
So lawless their customs, so makeshift their home;
And hence, when a woman of Helen's degree,
Put in an appearance, unmarried and free,
Determined to share their discomforts and lot,
Not a man in the crowd but would gladly have fought

To do her a favor. No Empress or Queen
Such homage or loyalty ever has seen,
As that which was offered this maid from the East,
Whose modest demeanor her beauty increased.
Ere a month had elapsed she had won every heart,
And her own was besieged by fell arrow and dart.
All alike—from the owners of quartz lode and mill
To the humblest employee—exerted their skill,
And tried every tactic that Cupid has shown,
To make Helen's bosom respond to their own.

3

Though suitors to Helen were nothing so rare—
The East like the West know when maidens are fair—
Yet her comfortless home, with its worry and toil,
Craved an ear that would listen nor seek to embroil,
Craved an arm that would shield and protect her from
harm—

A Heart that responsive her own might make warm;
And so when among her admirers there came
A gallant young fellow—Ned Walters by name—
Who was "boss of the shift" at a neighboring mine—
Bidding fair to be owner if worth was a sign,—
The maiden was charmed, as the bold cavalier
So frank and so generous, so very sincere—
Daily told her his love and swore to be true,
She listened enraptured, what else could she do?
He drank some they said and had gambled at whiles,
But pledged with such promptness in range of her smiles
That he'd give such things up if she'd only be kind
And honor his suit as he knew her inclined,
That at last she rewarded his urgent desire,
And Love lit his torch at a new kindled fire.

How vain is the hope that essays to explain
 The actions of lovers. Their pleasures contain
 Too much that is perfect. They live far aloof,
 From those who would tangle love's heavenly woof,
 By trying to tell to the brains of the throng
 What hearts and not brains have attuned into song.
 To Helen and Ned a new life had begun;
 In the eyes of the other the world held but one;
 Their leisure seemed lost or too tamely bespent,
 If it kept them apart from life's new found content;
 From tender embraces that silently told
 The story that telling can never make old;
 From eyes that beamed volumes, from hands that clasped
 tight;
 From lingering kisses that sealed love's delight.
 And so a year passed—none too quickly for Ned—
 Till at last upon Christmas the couple were wed.
 Rich gifts and good wishes were never so free;
 Each shop was left vacant the night of the spree;
 And the cot to which Ned and his lady repaired,
 Was filled with kind tokens of friendship they shared.

A home of her own—of her own and *by right*—
 That thought for the troubles gone past could requite.
 And Helen was happy as happy could be;
 While Ned fairly fed on her matronly glee.
 No task that could add to their comfort she shirked,
 In every crevice some handiwork lurked;
 Till the house like its mistress shone happy and bright,
 And to Ned was a haven of restful delight.
 He too did his share like a Trojan at first;
 He seemed to be weaned of his early time thirst;
 At the mine his promotion was never so sure,

When business demanded his presence, no lure
Could entice him away; his evenings were spent
With his wife; she was law; without her consent
No action seemed honest; her sweet sunny smile
Was all that he asked as reward for his toil.
"In pursuit of my duty how little I thought,"
Said Helen as often her husband she sought,
"That God in His goodness was leading me true
"To home and the Happiness found there with you."

6

And then came the baby. A happier man
Than Ned none could find from Beersheba to Dan.
He talked of the infant from morning till night;
To call it "his son" was his greatest delight.
Till Helen felt doubly repaid for the pain—
'Twas a labor of love her quick health to regain.
And she too was proud of the new tie that bound
Herself to her lord; the child's features were found
Each day to contain some new traces of Ned;
His hands and his feet and his shoulders and head.
Of course all the country soon heard the good news
A baby in camp could not fail to enthuse.
The miners felt tickled beyond all restraint;
Its mother they deemed little less than a saint;
The child was the subject of measureless praise;
There never was one had such innocent ways;
And Ned who had always stood in with the men
Now towered in glory. Again and again
He thought his right hand almost ready to wilt,
As his friends tried to show him how deeply they felt.

7

So great the excitement at last had become
The "boys" of his "shift" at the mine, keeping "mum,"

Assembled and planned an address and a purse
To give to their foreman. In language quite terse
They told of his good points, "his courage and worth;"
They mentioned his wife as "the pride of his hearth"
And then in due order their statements grew wild
As they lauded to heaven his wonderful child.
When all was prepared; the camp duly forewarned;
And the Poodle Dog tavern with bunting adorned;
The hero was asked in mysterious wise
To come the next evening and honor "the boys."
He did as they wished—could a fellow refuse?
One evening to please them his wife must excuse.
So the purse was presented; the document read;
And toasts with the old fashioned bumpers were made;
Till back in the haunts of his bachelor days;
Surrounded by scheming good-nature and praise;
He soon forgot Helen and baby and home
In noisiest revel, and gambling, and rum.

8

Luck seemed to stay with him in spite of the din;
When he threw for the drinks he was certain to win;
At the faro board too his kind stars he could thank;
It was luck and not playing that soon "broke the bank."
Inspired by such winnings and addled by wine,
Next day he determined to throw up the mine;
No longer he'd slave for a pittance so small:
He'd start a saloon that would outdo them all.
The pleadings—the tears of his wife were in vain;
An influence greater than hers now had rein;
In spite of her horror of wine and its woe,
Of all her long efforts its shadows to show,
He scoffed "such quite womanish worry" to scorn,
And sought to forget her sad face in the horn.
He bought out the Poodle Dog; treated the boys;
Reopened the place with great flourish and noise;

Went deep into debt to replenish its stock
And feasted all "dead heads" who 'round him might
flock.

While Helen, dishonored, new swallowed her pride,
And womanlike sought her home troubles to hide.

9

Oh Wine, thou deceiver—whose flattering smile,
So many have trusted, till fearless of guile
They bowed at thy shrine but to suffer disgrace—
How long must we yield thee the pick of our race?
How long must our poets—our heroes—our kings—
With the fame of whose actions the universe rings;
But be slaves at thy footstool and dying at length,
Fill the numberless graves that are proof of thy
strength?

How long must the weak ones, already too low,
Be lured by thy wiles to embrace their worst foe?
Or the rich in thy worship lose all they possess,
And when beggared, still serve thee to soothe their
distress?

'Tis true that the victims of sickness and grief,
By flying to thee may gain present relief;
But Death and Despair when they forego their prey
Too often but gild a less merciful sway.
And once in thy power oh what wrecks we become!
Forgetful of family—of duty we roam;
Still, feebly pretending to guide our affairs,
We sing thee the solace—not source of our cares.

10

The road to the Devil is slippery and steep,
Ned's fall was so sudden that angels might weep.
Instead of enlarging his easy won trade;
He drank up his profits before they were made;

His generous nature now found a new vent :
He treated his friends before paying the rent.
Till creditors, warned by his high-handed way,
Came down on his stock like a hawk on its prey
And left him a pauper ; in shame and despair
He wandered from home leaving Helen to care
For herself and the baby. But once he returned,
To take from her all that her savings had earned,
Under plea of reforming. The next that she heard
He had drifted from town—neither sending her word—
Nor money—nor letter to tell where he went :
And this was the grave of her wedded content.
Her mother had died ere the baby was born ;
There was not a person to whom she could turn ;
True pride with misfortune is ever increased ;
To tell such disaster she could not write East.

PART III

THE PARTING FROM HONOR.

HAIL Poverty grim! Is there earthly born wile,
Exerted, can win those who serve thee to smile?
Or drive those, who glory in forcing recruits
To march in thy army, to other pursuits?
Why is it that over our great smiling land,
Thy legions to every far corner extend?
And that in the midst of such fabulous wealth,
The poor eke scant living by sweat, toil and stealth?
Alas! No one knows. But the struggle goes on;
And millions are forced to face poverty's frown.
Poor Helen, deserted, yet nursing vague hope,
Now seeks in a town on Pacific's broad slope
To earn for her baby a right to its life,
And living for both in a city's keen strife.
The mining camp offered no honest retreat;
She dared not stay longer. Dependence is sweet
When the bond that inspired it is legal and pure;—
All other dependence suspicions ensure.
So Helen, unwilling to risk her fair name,
To dangers more deadly unwittingly came.

2

Too little she knew of a city's cold fare;
Of the cruel reception poor strangers meet there;
From infancy used to a gossipy ville,
Where each one his neighbor's disasters could tell,
And every newcomer is instantly known;
That never before was she so much alone.
In reply to her suit for permission to toil,
The citizens shun her as one who might soil;
Her baby, her youth, and her shabby attire,
Seem tell-tale detractions to those who might hire.
She knows herself honest; but goaded by pride,
Her tale of misfortune she struggles to hide,

And begs to be tested ; but vain is her plea :
The laws of the city have no such decree.
In growing distress days and weeks pass her by.
In vain her petition ! In vain her clear eye !
Her modest demeanor could little avail,
An angel might seek for their pity and fail,
A reference, the edicts of town life require,
To trust girls without one is playing with fire.

3

Thus friendless and fearful one morning by chance
She picked up a paper ; her hap-hazard glance
Soon fell on the notice : "House-keeper required ;"
"One willing to go to the country desired."
She hoped while she feared as with prayers for success
She hurried at once to the lawyer's address ;—
For a lawyer had signed it ;—one Duckett, by name—
And when to his office she presently came
She found him at desk. He was handsome and fair ;
And rose at her entrance with studious care ;
Politely assisting the girl to a seat,
He talked of the weather—the dust in the street—
And then when her errand she humbly confessed,
He seemed so astonished at such a request—
So sorry that fortune had brought her so low—
That Helen was conquered. Tears started to flow
And telling her story, her wrongs and her care,
Her long search for work in face of despair,
She begged for employment. The lawyer seemed moved
And told her at once her request was approved.

4

Apparently shocked at the husband's vile course
He promptly advised an immediate divorce—

The chances looked grave that he'd harrow her peace
By demands for her earnings. Without a release
He might kidnap the child and by holding it still,
Thus make her submit to his profligate will.
She shudders at first at the lawyer's advice
"Perhaps he'd reform," she rejoined in a trice;
But her mothers-heart quailed at the possible loss
Of the one certain solace in every cross—
Of the child she had borne and had held at her breast—
Of the sweet little babe she so often caressed.
And then first remembering her penniless state
"Divorces cost money," she ventured with weight.
But the lawyer quite eagerly hastened to add:
"If you wish a divorce I'll be only too glad
To see that you get one;" then turning around
He searched till a pass to the country he found,
And handing it to her desired her to come,
By first train tomorrow to see her new home.

5

Relieved and delighted by fortunes new flight;—
At the change to a safe from a beggarly plight;
No wonder the morrow found Helen on hand
All ready to learn her new duties as planned.
The out-of-town villa—a lovely retreat
Where the well-to-do lawyer escaped from the heat
And bustle of business—was easily found,
And soon as its keeper, glad Helen was crowned.
Her thoughtful employer—unmarried she learned—
Having waited her coming seemed deeply concerned:
"That at times she'd be lonesome so far from the
town?"
But she gratefully answered: "'Neath poverty's frown
"Those who sue should be thankful whatever their
fate."
And so without further ado or debate

The girl was installed. Her duties were light.
The house was not large but was airy and bright.
And with a home-pride still as strong as of old
Her care in its neatness and comfort soon told.
Her baby was with her and time slipped away;
While trouble a moment retired from its prey.

6

From the first, too, the lawyer was gentle and kind;
His refinement recalled Redfern's guests to her mind.
He studied at all times to lighten her load,
And won her respect by his decorous mode.
He seemed to take pleasure in pleasing her child;
And grew so enraptured, if baby but smiled,
The heart of the mother—impulsive and warm—
By such benefaction was taken by storm.
She thought her employer above all deceit;
His generous treatment of her seemed replete
With loftiest motives of virtue and truth;
She honored him for it; undreaming of ruth
She showed by each action her grateful desire
To serve him from choice and not merely for hire.
She thought of her lot ere he came to her aid;
Of the cruel aspersions all others had made;
Of his ready acceptance of her and her suit;
Of his offer of help should her husband dispute
Her right to the child; of his subsequent care,
Till no act of service seemed more than his share.

7

Observing his power o'er his housekeeper's heart
The lawyer, now sure of his well-concealed art,
Increased his dark wiles and with ardor more keen,
Hung long on her smiles with a lover's rapt mien.
Each hour that was spent in his out-of-town home

Was given to Helen ; and, no longer dumb
He told of his love—of his passion to please
Her eyes of all others—that she held the keys
To all his ambitions. In accents that burned
He begged her to tell if his love were returned?
Returned! What a question to ask her, she thought ;
As she artlessly knelt and thanked God for her lot.
But what about Ned? She would need a divorce?
“Oh that,” Duckett said, “a mere matter of course—
“Could be had for the asking. Some months might
elapse—
“Long months for them both they might be—unless—
p’raps—
“Why of course—yes ; a contract now privately signed,
“By his knowledge of law would quite legally bind.”
And ready to trust to his honor her life
She signed what she thought made her once more a wife.

8

Again on fair Helen a bright future dawned ;
Her fortunes again wielded hope-giving wand.
Wrapped up in the love of the man she adored ;
To wealth and its luxuries safely restored ;
She pictured herself on an equal once more
With friends of her childhood—her guardians of yore.
One only complaint against fate she could find :
The lawyer, though still as indulgent and kind,
Since Summer was waning and Autumn clouds rolled,
Spent more of his evenings in town than of old.
His business was booming he gave as his plea,
Without losing clients he could not get free.
And dreamless of danger, nor wishing to seem
A foe to his business, she oft changed the theme.
At times he would tell her without her request
How the suit for divorcement had lately progressed
Until by such art to security lulled—

Her instincts for safety so constantly dulled—
She lived on in ignorant quiet and bliss;
With naught to distract but his passionate kiss.

9

But soon Helen noticed her partner grown strange;
Nor could she account for the obvious change;
Still trusting and patient she strove as before
To call forth the love that seemed lessening in store.
Long weeks often passed her, but lonely and drear
The villa without him each day would appear;
Till back he would come and with ready excuse
Make meagre amends for his growing abuse.
She often in secret would wonder and pray
How soon the divorce would her troubles allay;
For when it was gained the young lawyer had said
They'd then in the city be publicly wed.
But woe to her hopes while awaiting that day
She chanced on a paper in which, with display,
A notice appeared: "Lawyer Duckett engaged;
"A society belle has his ardor assuaged;
"Miss Blank wears the barrister's tale-telling ring—
"Will join hands and hearts at the opening of Spring."
Like a flash was explained all his treatment of late;
And she was his victim—Oh God! What a fate!

10

Half crazed by the knowledge her honor was lost;
Resolved on revenge at no matter what cost;
From the cottage she rushed like a spirit of flame—
Caught the train for the city as soon as it came—
And, once at the station, the foremost to land;
The ill-fated paper still clutched in her hand;
She flew to the spot where so lately in want
She had wept in her trouble while begging a grant

Of labor. His studied demeanor of truth,
As pitilessly he fore-blasted her youth,
Came back to the girl now abandoned to shame
And rallied her will to revenge her lost fame.
The lawyer was startled as near him she stood;
Her eyes blazing fire could betoken no good;
But when by her queries he saw she knew all
His smile of derision too well proved her fall;
So grasping a sheath knife close hid in her breast,
She raised it to heaven with frenzy fired zest;
And ere he could move the keen steel to avoid
It had sunk to its handle deep—deep in his side.

PART IV

THE LAST PARTING OF ALL.

Oh why, in a world where divinity rules,
Are the pure and the virtuous only the tools
Of designing disease? Oh why do the good,
When ensnared by the wiles they long have withstood;
So often receive to increase their despair
Alone the reward that their tempters should share?
Oh why do the vicious so often succeed,
While those that they ruin are ruined indeed?
And why by mankind is success deemed a crown
That hides with its lustre the helpless cast-down?
But vain are such questions. No answer is heard.
The echo to taunt us throws back each vague word.
And the world still goes on putting virtue to rout
While the low-lived their victories lustily shout.
The revenge that his victim had hoped to obtain
Fell short of its object; for wounded—not slain—
The lawyer was able to doctor his hurt,
And set the law's minions upon the alert
To capture the woman, whose vengeance-tossed act
He knew had thus lessened her power to distract.

2

And Helen was found at the out-of-town cot
Embracing her baby. When led from the spot
She went as one dazed; of her crime scarce aware
Her actions betokened but motherly care.
At the prison she made no endeavor to plead,
But nervously owned to committing the deed.
She had not a friend within thousands of miles;
Since reaching the city her favors and smiles
Were centered and lavished on him whose deceit
Now left her unfriended injustice to meet.
At her trial all eyes turned with curious stare
To "size up" the prisoner; her tremulous air,

But heightened the wonder—it was her disguise
To lighten her sentence; some spoke their surprise
That such a dissembler had not done more harm;
Her disjointed story increased the alarm.
To think one so fallen should dare to pretend
That the popular lawyer had aught to defend.
“A twelvemonth in jail,” said the judge in disgust,
And quick into prison poor Helen was thrust.

3

Once safely removed from the Court room’s cold glare
To iron barred dungeon, dark, gruesome and bare;
The sore stricken woman—forsaken—despised—
Man’s much boasted justice at last realized.
For now while condemned in a prison’s ill fame
To think of her wrongs, of her soul-searing shame,
Of the virtuous hopes that had led her astray,
Of the fiend who had studied to make her his prey:
That fiend was permitted to see her confined,
While he went abroad further victims to bind.
What guilt had been done in her pre-natal state
That she must atone to the sleuthhound of Fate?
And why if her lot was to ceaselessly mourn
And suffer such pangs, had she ever been born?
But the dull dreary days followed others along—
Still mourning she mingled with misery’s throng.
Her case with the worst of the fallen was classed;
Her cell mates were always the lewd and unchaste.
And Helen, once pride of a millionaire’s home,
Through duty—through gratefulness—thus low had
come.

4

But not yet bereft of all ties to the past,
Her baby had with her to prison been cast,
And Helen rejoiced that she still had her boy—

A solace in sorrow, her last only joy—
His two years of life in a fond mother's arms,
Had nurtured her love and so heightened his charms,
That his glee banished trouble from even a cell,
And to memory of wrong was an unfailing knell.
By keeper and convict alike was he crowned
Till lord of the prison he soon knew no bound.
But even this solace Fate ordered removed;
Such lisping and laughter jail rigor reproved:
And so with a fever the child was laid low;
The damp of a prison is certain though slow.
He steadily sickened while frantic with fear
The mother sent heavenward prayer after prayer.
But all to no purpose—her nursing was vain—
Despite all her pleadings the baby was ta'en
And deep in the jail yard in prison garb dressed
She saw her dead darling laid rudely to rest.

5

The baby was buried. Now sullen with grief;
Weighed down by her loss without hope of relief;
Unnoticed by Helen her sentence grew less
Till soon it was ended; yet sad to confess
She went forth to freedom a prisoner still;
For who would employ her? and penniless—ill—
She wandered unfriended; too high-bred to beg,
At poverty's fountain she drank to the dreg.
Her pride and her hunger both gnawed at her heart,
She hated the world and its efforts to thwart;
She could not grow humble; she felt herself true,
What deed had she done that real virtue might rue?
A victim of chance she had always meant well—
Her credulous actions this story could tell.
But now cast adrift without shelter or food,
With no one to look to, in desperate mood,
She prayed she might die as she faintly lay.

But fellow unfortunates passing her way
Took pity on one who their cell mate had been
And saved her to suffer an anguish more keen.

6

'Tis strange but too true that when indigence pleads,
Or shows in affliction its much-pressing needs,
When pain and disease flaunt their wounds to the eye,
And wretched misfortune sends forth its keen cry,
The first to the rescue are not those who shine
In lofty domed churches as givers divine
(For sad to relate though intentions are good
The pious and needy seem ever at feud),
But the fallen—the so-called outsider to grace—
More often the milk of true kindness displays.
And when these can heal the unfortunate's sores,
No critical question the sufferer bores;
But sharing their purses the starving to save,
They rescue or smoothe a descent to the grave.
So Helen discovered, as hungry and weak—
The sweat of a fever grown cold on her cheek—
She finds food and cheer in the Magdalenes' cot
And sympathy too when they hear her hard lot.
Reviving, she shudders at thoughts of the shame
Yet gratefully hastens to share their ill fame.

7

And once she has stepped from the straight narrow
path,
The Devil for long fruitless temptings grown wrath,
Made swift her descent to the depths of that hell
Whose soul-killing horrors the vicious know well:
Where woman—the ci-devant victims of lust—
Become the seducers, and ground in the dust,
Drag down to their level too curious youth—

A luscious revenge for their own loss of truth—
Where maddened by wine and unconscious of self,
Their God-given bodies are bartered for pelf;
Till passion perverted and hardened in sin
Obscenity's laurels they eagerly win;
Where wildest of orgies by unforeseen stealth
Play havoc with virtue, with fortune, with health;
Where loathsome diseases requite the embrace
And honor to bestial scheming gives place.
Determined her life shall be merry if brief
Here Helen in drunkenness deadens her grief
And dreading remorse—from its pathway to fly—
She soon went the pace that to stop means—to die.

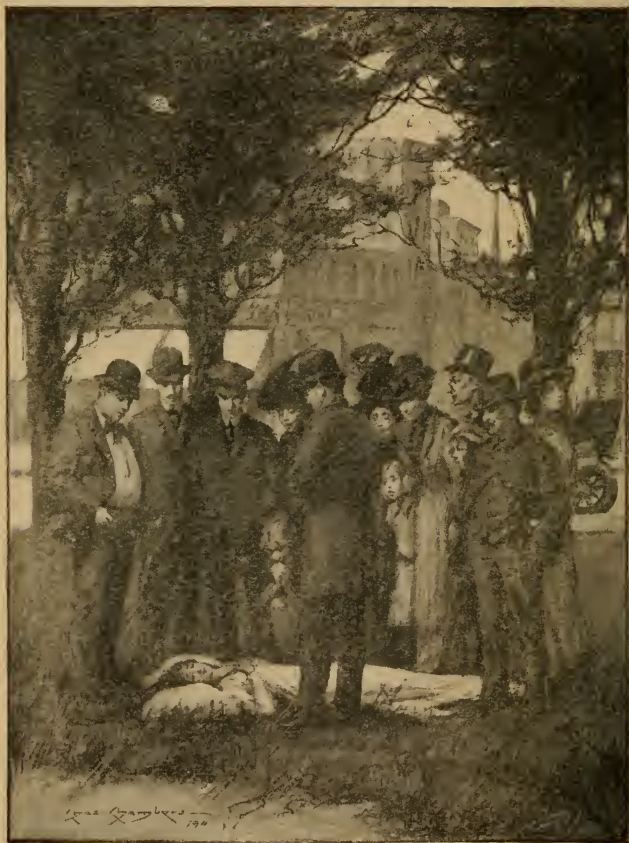
8

But vain was such flight. Though our speed like the wind
Leaves every conceivable rival behind;
Pursued by our conscience what matters the pace?
Its voice at the finish will portion the race.
There is no escape from that censuring slave:
Wrong acts still reproach at the brink of the grave.
So Helen who sought in the maddening din
Surcease from her sorrow—relief from her sin,
Found riot and revel a dangerous shoal
Whose rough ragged edges tore deep in her soul.
She daily, while striving her conscience to thwart,
Grew weaker and weaker—a worm at her heart.
By chance, as she sickened—death counting the days,
A newspaper item attracted her gaze;
It told that her husband (she knew by the name)
New—sobered and anxious to win back his fame
Was toiling one day in a mine's rocky slopes
(Doubtless thinking of her and rekindling hopes)
When a boulder, unnoticed, above him gave away
And Ned and his hopes were its taciturn prey.

The news of his fate brought regret to the wife
 He long had abandoned to struggle and strife.
 "Poor Ned!" she exclaimed as the tears trickled down,
 "Poor Ned!—and the baby! Thank God they are gone;
 "Had they lived—Ah, their death is a heaven-sent
 boon"—

And at thoughts of her ruin she sank in a swoon.
 Her moments are numbered; she, too, soon must die,
 Her baby—her husband—are hovering nigh:
 But no! they are gone; through the time gathered haze
 Her memory flits to the golden rayed days,
 When at "Redfern" she romped with her childhood's
 fast friends;
 While near her her Governess watchful attends.
 She sees the old Hudson, majestic and grave,
 Flow prouder than ever as deep in its wave
 She dips with her comrades. Her pony is there,
 And perched on its back she is cleaving the air:
 The meadows all smile as they used to of old
 When searching for wild flowers among them she
 strolled;
 And even pet song birds still gladden the breeze
 From boughs she remembers in early-loved trees.

She turns from the vision with tremor and start;
 Her breath grown more heavy—more feeble her heart;
 The end is approaching; from dreams of her past
 To wake to surroundings so low and debased,
 Excites a remorse which though tardy is true,
 She shudders at scenes that now stifle her view;
 Around her all objects to vileness entice;
 The air that she gasps for, seems laden with vice;
 Till shame-tossed and wretched, nor able to rest,



“Where soon all oblivious of questioning eyes
In gratitude smiling she peacefully dies.”

She sobs in her anguish a dying request:
"Oh take me," she pleads, "from this chamber of sin;
"Let me once more see heaven—breathe purity in;
"Let me die out of sight of this loathsome retreat—
"Take me anywhere—anywhere—out in the street."
Her face showing plainly how real is each word;
Her pleadings by soul-stricken sisters are heard;
And out to a grass plot, some distance away,
They carried her form as it languidly lay;
Where soon all oblivious of questioning eyes
In gratitude smiling she peacefully dies.

FINALE

IN penitent agony gasping for breath,
The Magdalene lies on her pillow of death;
Above her no roof hides the fathomless sky;
Around her a crowd stands with wondering eye—
Now pushing—now crushing—to see the young face
Of suffering sister so fallen from grace.
Yet she heeds not the mob or its curious stare;
She heeds not its strife in her struggle for air;
She has done with the world and its worry and woe;
She has done with the causes that laid her so low:
Away from the haunts of her shame and her sin,
She looks up at Heaven its mercy to win.
And Heaven rewards her: before her glad eye
The angels are hovering to bear her on high;
The jeers and the pity and oaths of the throng
Are but notes in her ears of celestial song.
“Who is she? “What’s happened?” the queries fast f
“A prostitute dying,” new voices reply;
“Is that all?” say some and continue their way;
While others, more curious, as vulgarly stay.
But no! It is not all: That fast fleeting soul
Is one of too many to reach the same goal;
On well beaten path; o’er the same deadly snare;
By circumstance—cruelty—falsehood—despair.
But soft! It is over; life’s hour-glass is run;
Now Death has completed what man had begun.
May He, whose inscrutable purposes stand—
Whose wisdom the fall of credulity planned,—
Now welcome her home to that faraway shore,
Where wrong cannot anchor and shame is no more.

JIM
OR BORN TO BE LYNCHED

BEGUN IN PARIS, FRANCE
IN 1897

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE are a number of the United States of America that refuse to recognize a marriage between persons of white and negro blood even to the eighth generation. It is in those States particularly (although there are startling exceptions) that lynching is prevalent. The recollection of slavery days, the poverty and consequent ignorance of the blacks, the high standard of purity among most Southern white women and the chivalry of Southern white men as a whole work together to make lynching possible.

No mob can do justice, however. And although public opinion in the South proclaims immediate death as the only way to punish the far too frequent occurrence of white women being waylaid and ravished by depraved negroes, still a moment's thought should convince anyone that lawlessness cannot make people law abiding. The author recalls many years of life in the Southern States as the happiest years in his memory. Southerners are the very soul of honor. Their very excuse of lynching, "that it is to preserve the chastity of their women," proves that the light that leads astray is light from heaven.

But lynching is a blot on any civilization. Give it an inch and it takes the proverbial ell. Its appetite cannot be satisfied and, once permitted, no man's life is safe. Suspicion, to the mob, is sufficient proof and in every death without a trial we are making all too ready the noose that may ultimately tighten on our own neck. If the following story will assist to show the injustice of hanging even guilty negroes without a trial, the author will feel a thousand times repaid for any effort he has made.

PART I

THE DEATH OF JIM'S FATHER.

THE world is dreaming. From the darkness deep
No sound is heard to stir its heavy sleep,
Save when scared fledgling from o'ercrowded nest
Makes sudden clamor for protecting breast;
But even that grows still. New quiet creeps;
Again the darkness its lone vigil keeps.
Till through the pines a mist begins to rise
That casts dim halo o'er the orient skies;
Then wakes the cock whose clarion voice loud rings
And cleaves the silence that to nighttime clings;
And from the summits of a dozen hills
Long answering chorus through the dawning shrills.
Thus roused, the watchdog, wondering at the light,
Bays at the shadows of retreating night;
While grumpy frogs, disturbed from slumbers sweet,
And twittering birds and squeaking mammals greet
The golden rays, that soon from out the East
Bear far the blessings of earth's great high priest.
The flowers and trees refreshed and decked with dew,
The waving crops now smiling on the view,
The busy bees that vie with zephyrs light
To steal the fragrance from the roses bright;
These all awakened strive with man to say
Their grateful praises to the God of day.

But on the hillside, near yon winding way,
What is that object stops the glistening ray?
What is it dangles in the morning air
From bough where curious chipmunks stop to stare;
While lowering ravens change their headlong flight,
Appalled and startled by the uncanny sight?
'Tis but a negro. Should our hearts beat fast
Because some erring slave has breathed his last?
Such scene means justice to a Southern eye—

When blacks grow human they should surely die.
Shine on, fair sun; pierce through the crumbling clay
And light the vultures to their ready prey.

* * * * *

On yonder road that skirts the deep ravine
And climbs from valley to a plateau green;
How calm the prospect o'er the verdant heath!
How fierce and threatening yawns the gulf beneath!
But up the road a team is coming now;
Hear how the jolts resound from hillocks' brow;
See, too, how carelessly the rein is held;
Surely such folly is by fate impelled.
For hold! a twig, loosed by the fitful breeze,
Drops to the ground across the horses knees;
Heaven help the inmates: see the coursers rear:
Hear how they pant with lightning-footed fear.
Now see the driver in the buggy stand,
One rein alone is in his nerveless hand.
Ah! see he jumps—nor hears his comrade's cry—
Backward he springs and leaves the girl to die.
Over the gorge two wheels already lean;
Still plunge the horses in their terror keen;
Now hear the shrieks that pierce the dusty gloom:
"Merciful God avert this awful doom."

God hears the cry: for o'er the rugged height
Quick peers a head that sees the fearful plight:
Down, down he comes; from root to rock he creeps;
Over the buggy's back he nimbly leaps:
Now in the place where late the driver stood;
Now daring dangers that another rued;
Watch how he clammers for the missing rein;
See! he has found it and is back again;
Back with the maiden whom he surely saves—
A man is master of the fate he braves.—

The frightened steeds now once again in hand
Have reached the summit of the tableland;
Where, with a steady power behind the reins,
Nothing but memory of the plight remains.
And who is he that hazards life and limb?
Who first dares Death, then foils the Monster grim?
Is he a scion of some noble line?
Virtues unnumbered through this action shine.
No! though the act bespeaks a hero brave
The face says only; He's a negro slave.

* * * * *

Weeks have slipped by since that eventful day;
Oblivion marks the feat an easy prey.
All now forget the daring darkey's deed;—
'Twas but a trifling service due in need.
Had he been white, the papers through the land
Might have extolled to sky the fearless stand.
But ink is dear: more worthy themes it craves:
Who cares to read exploits of common slaves?
Yet there is one remembers well that ride;
One grateful heart yields nothing to its pride;
The girl whose life hung on the single thread;—
Had he not acted she would now be dead—
Gives to the hero what by right is due;
She loves him for the act and loves him true.
But oft, alas, our loves our scourges are;
The sweets we dote on all our futures mar:
Even a love that springs from honest heart
May to its object prove disastrous dart.
Better for yon proud negro far than this,
Had he been headlong hurled down deep abyss.

But let who can refuse the dear embrace
Of maiden moulded with such fairy grace;

Whose golden hair in silken ringlets streamed,
Down back where hints of countless beauties gleamed;
Whose eyes like violets from seclusion shone,
And filled with music what they beamed upon;
Whose cheeks were tinted like the daintiest peach,
And could a lesson by their blushes teach
Of guileless innocence and truth and love—
Of all the attributes of saints above;
Whose modest lips like little rosebuds bloomed,
Till all who saw them, in their service doomed,
Still hovered near in hopes the fragrance rare
To them might wander on the vagrant air;
Whose ripening breasts, so soft and fresh and free,
Like tiny billows on Elysian sea,
Now flowed—now ebbd—upon the zephyrous tide
Of scented sweetness when the maiden sighed.
Too few would falter, once such love to know,
To face a future of the direst woe.

Sometimes 'tis title storms the maiden's heart;
Oft gilded riches guide the feathery dart;
Perhaps a kindness from a careless hand,
Ties some at last in matrimonial band;
Strength, too, with promise of protecting care
Has won affection from the timid fair;
But never yet, since Cupid first began
To list his service in the cause of man,
Has courage failed to pierce the pathway dark,
Or missed the center of the shining mark.
All maidens love a hero though his face
May savor even of a slave's disgrace.
But love of slaves can only hidden be;—
Stern edict draws the line unflinchingly;
Such passion, though as pure as God may cause,
Is held unworthy by vain human laws;
Custom cares nothing where the heart may guide—
A king must consort with a royal bride;

Till such void laws degrade the human race
And make men what they're not to outward gaze.

And what is hidden, must, though long we wait,
Crop up to meet us with unlooked for fate.
The planter, learning of his daughter's care
For slave he purchased at her urgent prayer,
Late tracks the lovers to their trysting place
And finds them locked in fondest love's embrace.
Oh God! What horror for a father's sight!
Haste—haste revenge! for such an awful blight.
Hang the black traitor to the nearest tree;—
There let him answer to eternity.
His only child seduced by such an one
Whose instant death can scarce a jot atone;
“Though I refused this morn with him to part
“For thrice the weight in gold of his dark heart,
“More deeply would I scorn to take it now—
“Here, let me hoist him to avenging bough.”
A dozen eager hands afford their aid;
Soon high in air the dying negro swayed:
And there they left him a rebuke to all—
While noiselessly the shades of even fall.

PART II

THE DEATH OF JIM'S MOTHER.

TWELVE weary years have left their furrowed trace
Upon the features of a once fair face;
Twelve years of mental suffering and care
Have early changed to grey that golden hair;
But still through all the grief and pain and tears,
Again we see the girl of former years,
Whose wealth of love around its object proud
Proved all too soon that object's sombre shroud.
And now she lies her moments fleeting fast,
On Death's damp pillow—nor regrets the past:
The tide of life is ebbing to that shore
Where sorrow ceases and where pain is o'er.
Beside her bed with loving, tearful eye,
In silence listening to each lessening sigh,
With woolly curls and darkly mantled face,—
Recalling all too well a fond embrace—
Kneels Jim—young Jim her dearly purchased boy,
From whom no stigma could her heart decoy—
While with her hand close tangled in his hair,
Her flagging breath essays this dying prayer:

"Oh Thou! Most High, Omnipotent and Great!
"To whom all creatures must or soon or late
"With deep humility and penance bow,
"Turn to the trembling soul that seeks Thee now.
"Thou who unaided makes the sun to shine;
"Whose humblest work proclaims a hand divine;
"Hear and attend a helpless Mother's plea
"As on her bed of death she calls to Thee.
"Thou, who, already, ere her life began,
"Had fixed her place in Thy eternal plan;
"Whose watchful eye pursued her childhood years;
"Who made her mortal with her hopes and fears;
"Who placed the spark of love within her breast;

"Then fanned it to a flame of fearful zest—
"Till first a lover, then a heart-broke sire,
"Become forced offerings to its awful fire;
"And now, she too, before Thee soon must prove
"Still one more victim to that same dread love.
"But, if Thou wilt, let this last life atone
"And spare, oh Great Creator! spare her son."

The sufferer's voice grew faint and fainter still;
The words in whispers through the hushed room thrill.
The boy still kneels with sorrow-stricken air
Beside the bed, while through his curly hair
With deathless love still strays the mother's hand,
As to the skies again her prayers ascend:

"Oh Heavenly Father, promised Guide of all,
"Whose careful eye sees e'en the sparrow's fall;
"Here as I lie expecting soon to meet
"And fall adoring at Thy Mercy seat;
"My heart's last drops send to Thy Judgment Throne
"To ask Thy pity for my guiltless son.
"Thou know'st the secret of his hapless birth;
"Thou know'st his father and his father's worth;
"Thou know'st the love that sprang from virtue's core,
"And caused the hardships that have pressed so sore;
"And well Thou know'st, I feel within my breast,
" 'Twas not Thy Law but Man's that I transgressed;
"But if I've sinned then me alone destroy:
"Wreak not Thy vengeance on *my sinless boy.*"

"Most Gracious, Loving and Forgiving God!
"Keep Thou his feet upon the narrow road;
"His way is destined to be lone and steep;
"The gloomy past must ever on him creep.
"That burning flood that through each vein descends,
"Do Thou subdue or use to righteous ends;
"Through all the devious ways that he must walk—

"When dark temptations 'round his pathway stalk—
"Be Thou nearby Thy ready aid to lend;
"To be his Comfort and his Guide and Friend.
"Despite the efforts of the lewd to lure
"May he be ever true and wise and pure;
"Teach him the time to blush, the time to sigh,
"And when to act and when to nobly die.
"To Thee I leave him—hear my dying prayer,
"Be his young life Thy special thought and care;
"Oh God! Be merciful. If 'tis decreed
"Let not—let not"—but, ere the thought is freed,
The spirit of the thinker takes its flight
To realms of darkness and of voiceless night.

Bereft of Mother! What a nameless loss.
Is there for man a harder, heavier cross?
Bereft of her whom whispering angels told
His earliest movements in a mortal mould;
And who thrice happy in her secret sight,
Prepared to love him ere he saw the light;
Who for his sake endured the keenest pain—
E'en unto death but counted all as gain;
The very torture was her measure true
Of coming sacrifice she thought his due;
Who watched his baby lips upon her breast
Drink in elixir and then sink to rest;
And at such times has breathless stopped to trace
Some new found beauty on his infant face;
Who gladly hastened, at his childish call,
To praise his prowess or arrange his doll,
To wet his lips in midnight's lonely hour,
Or while yet day to shield from pelting shower;
Whose leisure moments were made glad by dreams,
Of happy futures by Arcadian streams,
Where all the castles that she built in air,
Held him as Master with his ease her care.

To lose our Mother is to lose that friend
Whom, by our side, the gods did singly send.
It is a blow, to which all other blows,—
Like mount of ice assailed by drifting snows,—
Are vain; and leaves us like a ship at sea
With rudder gone and breakers on her lee.
Our Mother is the only star we boast;
To trust to others must be at our cost.
A Father's love is dear; 'tis based on pride;
But when most needed is too oft denied;
A Wifely love oft gentle smiles secure,
And while we smile such love may still endure;
But when the tempest and the storm clouds lower,
When passions burn us and our virtues cower,
When all around seems ruin and disgrace;
'Tis then—Yes, then—we seek a Mother's face;
And in those eyes, where, meek or bold, we peer:
How well we knew it—is the faithful tear.
Ah Jim! poor Jim! Your present grief is whim,
Your way is darkened as you little dream.

PART III

THE DEATH OF JIM.

TIME, tireless Time! to thee the ages bow,
Each heaping laurels on thy hoary brow.
Grief, Love and Pride all vanish at thy nod;
Thy creeping power can even Fame defraud.
Caesars may prosper; Alexanders storm,
Napoleons trample on their fellow worm;
But Lo! when highest, see their boasted sway
Fall to the ground and falling fade away.
Homer steps forth; all peoples hear his tread;
A Virgil's voice re-echoes o'er the dead;
A Shakespeare comes and now the maddening throng
Do homage to his seeming deathless song;
But all is vain;—their throbbing words grow weak—
'Tis doubtful now of whom the nations speak.
The maiden sighs: "Ah yes, I will be true;"
The dreamer vows what wondrous things he'll do;
The widow knows her heart will surely break;
And all are fearful for the orphan's sake;
But fancied fates soon yield, while vows wax strange,
To Time—inexorable God of Change.

* * * * *

Cementing War has crossed dissentient land,
And struck the fetters from the shackled hand.
O'er negro huts the flags of freedom wave;—
Now only habit can the hosts enslave—
And Jim, the lad we left 'neath sorrow's ban,
Now strides in virile pride a bearded man.
Mark how hard toil has rounded like a charm
His corded calf, his muscled thigh and arm;
See how his shoulders, chiselled like a god's,
The effect of labor and its use applauds;
The forehead high, with raven curls to crown
Glistening in shocks and soft as eider down;

The tender honest eyes with whites so clear;
'Neath shaggy brows that scout the thought of fear;
The thickset neck; the shapely dimpled chin;
The ruddy lips; the dark-complexioned skin;
These all with bubbling life transfused and warm
Combine to make proverbial creole form:
We trace his mother's culture in his face;
And in his rugged frame his father's race.

Now further South than when we saw him last;
In endless Summer land Jim's lot is cast.
The fields of cotton and of tasselled corn,
Near which he spent his life's unhappy morn,
Give place to groves of orange and of lime
And all the products of a tropic clime.
The so-called Winter, with its sunny days,
And floral trophies where the tourist strays,
Has drawn him, too, among a motley mass
Who serve the foibles of the wealthier class:
And he, attendant on a Croesus' whim,
Today is wandering in an airy dream.
But mark that meeting on the winding road
That leads from ocean to a rich abode;
What means that flush upon Jim's olive cheek;
Those bounding steps some inward story speak;
See! now one comes and first his face aflame
Grows pale as saffron as he breathes her name;—
No servile thought has urged that bending knee—
'Tis native grace and inborn chivalry.

And who is she that noiselessly draws nigh,
With furtive glances from her long-lashed eye?
A wood nymph surely? or a dryad fair?
Did Venus ever have such lovely hair?
Each pencilled brow to perfect arch enswerves—
Artists might try in vain to make such curves.

That marble forehead with its regal turn;
Those velvet cheeks where little sunsets burn;
That proud uplifted nose; those crimson lips,
With life blood tingling in their glowing tips;
Those dainty ears half hid in shadowy locks;
That rounded chin that boasted virtue mocks;
That portly neck which all are fain to trace
With ravished vision to its swelling base—
All—all assist to give the matchless power
Fair woman wields in man's unguarded hour.
Women are weak but men are worse at whiles
When beauty flaunts them and with meaning smiles.
May Hall is one whom hosts have learned to fear—
Her graces dazzled till their lives grew drear.

But how this meeting? Is it all by chance?
Not altogether says that furtive glance.
A week has passed since first—his eye bewitched—
Jim saw the surf by her soft form enriched.
“She's from the North,” the gathering voices say,
But Jim discordant turned his gaze away:
What right had he to look at limbs so fair!
He—a mulatto!—how absurd to dare!
The law has ordered he must wed a black:
His choice is higher, but the law—alack!
And as he starts to drag his lingering feet
Far from the spot where tempting visions greet,
His eye meets hers—when lo! his pulses thrill;
She looks admiringly nor curbs her will.
Surely he dreams? Could such an angel form
In him find aught her fairy hope to charm?
Why throbs his heart as it ne'er throbbed before?
What current joins him to retreating shore?
He knows too well. Responsive chords ne'er jest:
A kindred feeling warms that other breast.

Now into mist life's cloud begins to fade;
Far to the North he flits with Northern maid;
There none will know the blood that browns his face
Coursed, since the flood, through veins of Afric race;
There jeers will cease, nor of his birth remind;
There he will walk a man among his kind.
Over a farm he'll lord it like a king;
Oh, how he'll work and make the welkin ring!
With her as wife how happy home will be:—
See where it stands near spreading Maple tree;
And like the brook close by will glide away
Peaceful his days beneath love's gentle sway.
She shall not want; her will shall be his law;
He will be true and life will know no flaw.
Oh who can paint the smile that lights her face,
As in his arms she's locked in dear embrace;
Or who can sing the rapture of their bliss
As on her brow he presses chastest kiss—
While o'er a cradle 'neath that Northern sky
He hears her hum a baby's lullaby.

Dreams such as these have filled the flying week;
And urged to scenes that *both* have seemed to seek.
Hope spreads the net with artful winning wile;
Daily May's glance has lightened weary toil:
See! she grows bold, while none are passing near,
And with fond words delights his doubting ear.
Then comes a note to which sweet fragrance clings;
Is it her breath the guilty letter brings?
Ah no! a pansy plucked from shady bower—
That seeming modest but impulsive flower—
Hides for a moment from his eager gaze
(As though 'twere jealous of the hidden praise)
These ardent words:

“My Heart's Love and my King:
“A thousand kisses let this missive bring.

"All my long years have failed to leave with me
"Bliss like the bliss that is inspired by thee.
"Oh how I hate the fate that makes me white,
"To be your queen I'd grow as dark as night.
"Come darling, come at four o'clock today;—
"Come to the ocean path—
Your loving May."

And now he comes. Like one beset with dreams
Who tries to wake but still the vision beams.
Slowly she leads him to a sheltered glen
Out of the haunts pursued by busy men;
And where a rubber stretches roots around
To raise in knolls the moss encovered ground,
Close to its base upon luxurious seat,
Now they are resting from the sultry heat.
It is retreat for privacy and ease,
Disturbed by naught but palm-seducing breeze;
Save that at times is heard the idle roar
Of old Atlantic as he chafes his shore.
The zephyrous air is heavy with perfume
Of luscious pines and guava groves in bloom;
While far aloft, beyond where red bird peers,
Heaven's azure vault its tropic grandeur rears.
Jim's heart beats fast as on earth's lap he lies;
His thoughts are pure as yonder arching skies;
Soon he will speak the hope that fills his breast—
Soon will he kneel to be her slave confessed.

He has been chaste;—no easy spoken boast—
Millions have foundered when by passion tost,
And with the memory of their losing strife,
Now doubt if any have kept clean their life.
Through all the years when youthful follies rage
Wreaking vain vengeance against wisdom's cage
Jim has been thinking of the fervid prayer,

His mother whispered in her dying care,
To that Great Being in the dark obscure
To keep him ever "true and wise and pure."
He too, had early formed a high ideal;
Few women measured to its worth so real;
And what temptation to the mass might seem,
To him was nothing but repulsive dream.
And when as oft he felt the currents fly
Urged by the voice "Increase and multiply"
Till each blue vein was bursting with the flow,
And burning forehead told of passion's glow,
Kind fate had kept him out of tempter's power
Till cooled by reason's slow returning shower.

But now his chasteness proved the giddy steep
From which he stumbled to forbidding deep.
Pure in his own, he deemed May's love more pure;
Her very beauty made him doubly sure.
"Beauty," he thought—but oh, how vain his wit:—
How well such wisdom did his chasteness fit.—
"Beauty is but the outward form and sign
Of inward virtue and of soul divine."
Soon, soon he learned, but all too late to save,
The thought a traitor and her love his grave.
For May was false—a selfish debauchee—
Whose heart was black as mortal heart could be.
To wed a half-breed never crossed her mind;
Catch worldly woman making miss so blind;
In social circles 'twould have meant her doom—
A fate that palled her like an open tomb.
She wooed the creole for his handsome form;
Her lustful passion he had chanced to warm;
And now but led him into soft amour
To gild the memory of her Southern tour.

But day is waning. To the Western sky
The beams are pointing and blest moments fly.
Now at his feet with modest art she kneels,
Oh was there ever maid so pure he feels!
Close—closer still she meets his fervent kiss
Heart clings to heart in longing, lingering bliss.
And as he sits upon the mossy knoll,
Listening to sighs that sear his earnest soul,
See how she parts his knees to get more near—
Now he will speak the hope he holds so dear.

But ere the words find time to pass his lips
They are forgotten in a strange eclipse;
She lifts to his her passion-laden eyes;
When boiling torrents through his body flies;
Wine is but water to the maddening flood
Poured from those eyes to mingle with his blood;
A practiced wile—it proves too well its power—
Jim was but human in that honeyed hour.
Fears of the future are but weak indeed—
If passion drives us—to arrest our speed.
Thoughts of his mother—of his father's fate—
Of all the horrors that in hell might wait—
Flit o'er his mind but scarcely weigh a straw;
At last Jim hearkens to God's strongest law.

* * * *

But through the forest from Atlantic foam
Hark to some bathers as they hurry home;
Too late to hide! discovery is sure!
May's ready wit bethinks a plan secure.
Self preservation from fell scandal's dart
Endows trapped woman with consummate art.
Struggling, she rises with a piercing cry,
And rushes headlong to the passers-by;
Then, pointing wildly at dumbfounded Jim,

She begs protection from his bestial vim;
And seals concoction of her lying tongue
By swoon most tragic mid astonished throng.

The Southern honor is in arms at once;
Upon poor Jim the crowd indignant pounce.
Close to his heart a tell-tale letter lies—
Now let him use it and make real her sighs.
But no, more noble in his honest rage,
See where in fragments falls the dainty page.
He makes no effort in his own defense;
He feels half guilty with returning sense;
And like a dog they drag him to a cell,
In whose dark confines dins a boding knell.

HANGED WITHOUT A TRIAL.

"AND is she dead?" hoarse voices whisper low.
"Not yet but nearly;" and the speakers go.
Through all the town the gaining story flies;
For mile on mile the curdling message hies;
"A rape! a rape!" Another negro fiend!
"Our wives may suffer if this brute is screened!"
And groups of men new groups mysterious meet—
A mob assembles in the dusky street.
On every face the same set caste is seen;
"Curse on the scoundrel," says each stolid mien.
But not a sound from any lip is heard;
No tongue yet dares to speak the fatal word;
Till like the bursting of an angry cloud
A voice breaks forth from out the silent crowd:
"Lynch—lynch the dastard. Shall we idly see
"Fair stranger robbed of her virginity?
"Come let us hasten to yon loop-holed jail!
"Come or the monster may go safe and hale;
"While on her bed his suffering victim moans;
"How can we loiter near such piteous groans?"



“No eye but God’s surveys the darkling heath:
Jim’s stiffening body is alone with Death.”

Page 133.

Deep sink such words in every Southern breast;
A sheriff's protest is but mocking jest;
Now they have taken with peculiar ease
From would-be lyncher the great prison keys;
And grown impatient at the slight delay
The culprit has not even time to pray;
A score of feverish hands choke lingering hope
By twisting 'round his limbs the ready rope;
Quick through the town his tortured form is whirled;
Curse after curse upon his head is hurled;
"Here is the tree!" From high unbending bough
Soon he is dangling—all unconscious now—
Then, vengeance wreaked, but fear in every eye,
Fast from the scene the guilty lynchers fly.

* * * * *

The moon steals slowly up the blue serene;
Far reach its beams across the silent green.
Behind the gnarled oaks grim shadows creep;
The insect world is hushed in weird, still sleep;
No eye but God's surveys the darkling heath:
Jim's stiffening body is alone with Death.

IGNORANCE AS TYRANT
OR
THE PASSING OF UNCLE SAM

BEGUN IN VANCOUVER, B. C.
IN 1907

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following story, drenched as it is with tragic incident, would seem to be but the disordered imaginings of a dyspeptic, if it were impossible to otherwise account for it; but, like a former story herein, no important detail has been introduced that cannot be paralleled with newspaper clippings.

It is a regrettable but none-the-less obvious fact that "too much" is as possible as "too little" liberty, and a deplorable feature of the excess consists in the absolute lack of tolerance displayed by the class that in latter days are beginning to "feel their oats." The untrained freedom of the working classes in any land is quite as disastrous to good government as is the unlimited power of wealth, and must have about the same effect on civilization as that produced in a china shop by turning the proverbial bull loose among the delicate pottery.

The author is indebted for his very existence to a man who for a time was a "union" member and a so-called "knight of labor" and it is not to hold him or an organization of laborers up to contempt or contumely that this story is gathered together. God knows there is much to be said on both sides of the labor versus capital question. It is the departure from legitimate purposes, the assumption of a power that history and universal experience has proven must end, like the rebellions of Jack Cade and Wat Tyler, in confusion and anarchy, that has moved the writer to accentuate the results of giving any class (even the ci-devant down-trodden) an unlimited opportunity to rule.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

AN Adept in the happy realm of universal love,
Looked down on broad America, its greatest need to
prove :
He heard the voices from the farm, the market and the
mill ;
He hearkened to the echoings from prairie-land and hill :
He saw things as they really are and not as what they
seem ;
The groanings of the sore oppressed came to him as
a dream ;
The pauper told him all his woe, the workman all his
care,
And to his ear omniscient came sigh of millionaire.
The righteous breathed their far-off hope, the sinners
pled their shame
And every home throughout the land made clear to
him some claim.
And yet despite the selfish din of clashing class and clan
He knew that God had planted deep the seeds of good
in man.
With this in mind he listened long to catch the com-
mon wail
That underlay the growing strife, and lo ! he heard
this tale :

"Forgotten is the Golden Rule,—the one-time Chris-
tian's boast,
"We think of naught but selfish ends—nor count the
fearful cost ;
"No land can prosper all admit if what we say and do
"Is for the individual and not the nation too.
"And yet we persevere in plans to cut our rivals'
throats ;
"And o'er a neighbor's bleeding corpse a neighbor
madly gloats :

"We scheme to undermine our friends as though they
were our foes;
"Suspicion of our next of kin upon us daily grows:
"The white abhors the luckless black, the poor con-
demns the rich,
"The man would rule the woman and would force her
to the ditch;
"The child must quick excel in strength or by the way-
side fall;
"The cripple or the invalid is crowded to the wall:
"Brute force is once again in vogue, and ignorance
gains power,
"And o'er the twentieth century the middle ages lower."

"Your need is proved," the Adept said, "That rule God
gave to man,
"If followed up, can bring you back from out such
fearful ban.
"Your land is large enough for all if you'll adopt its
code,
"And let the strong protect the weak and tote his weary
load.
"To others do as you would wish that they should do to
you—
"Is all your nation has to heed to make it grand and
true:
" 'Twould teach you tolerance of race and of belief
and caste,
"And capital and labor strife would soon be of the past.
"Religious bigotry must cease and in its place come love,
"That would from every pulpit preach and guide you
up above.
"No Unions then nor soulless Trusts you'd need to
gain your end;
"The Golden Rule in every heart would every right
defend.

"Then from the great United States the World might
get its plan

"Of federation militant—THE BROTHERHOOD OF
MAN."

PART I

Captain Sam Roberts was a Southern planter,
Who, while he was more familiarly known
As Uncle Sam among his intimates,
Had yet well earned his title of Captain.
For four long years during the civil war
He had fought for the Confederacy.
Many times had he been wounded, and scars—
Honorable as a soldier might wear—
Were his pride, when, recounting to his friends
The battles in which he fought, he would show
Them and say: This I gained at Gettysburg:
And that at Lookout Mountain. As my due
Shiloh p'raps or Fredericksburg left me these.
And then he would tell how they were obtained,
What hardships they entailed, and of the time
He had spent in the enemy's prison,
Waiting to be exchanged.

He would detail
With graphic minuteness all the horrors
Of imprisonment and would warn hearers
Never to be taken captive while strength
Was left them to avoid it. He but once
Had suffered himself to be surrounded
And that was while lying insensible.
Often have his friends heard him tell of hunger,
Fatigue and bloodshed: of gallant sorties
In the dead of night to the Yankee camp
To reconnoiter the ground or forage.

But of all the stories he related
Of incident, war freak or experience,
There were none appealed to them more, or spoke
Better of the Captain's high character
Than the one he oft told of a Yankee,
Who, in a sudden retreat to a place
Of better advantage, had been entrapped

By him and caught in the act of hiding.
He had raised his rifle to shoot, when lo!
The Masonic sign of distress was made
By his desperate and crestfallen foe;
And the victor, himself an Arch Mason,
Remembering his solemn vow, lowered the gun
In mercy and let the Yankee escape.
The act was not forgotten and now,
As a proof of the Captain's best story,
A handsomely jeweled watch with the words:
"Remember the widow's son" and the name
Of a Northern colonel plainly engraved
On its case, was always sure to be found
In a part of the recipient's apparel.

But the Civil War was over. Its feuds—
Its bitterness—were a thing of the past.
Instead of Captain Sam he was oftener
Called "Uncle Sam" now. Partly for his looks
And partly because of his attitude
On every occasion of trouble.
For in all the land there was not a more
Patriotic citizen. The new South,
With first its long siege of dire poverty,
And then the reacting prosperity,
Found in Uncle Sam a man of the type
Of Grady, willing to forget his wounds
That the Nation be again united.

Georgia had been his home. A plantation
Worked by many slaves had descended
To him through several generations.
The Roberts family had long been of mark
And he inherited its nobility.
As with all the best Southern families
The slaves were well treated. During the war,—

No unusual circumstance to be sure,—
More than one of these negro domestics
Remained with his wife and child protecting
Them even at the expense of their lives,
While the Master was away at the front;—
Preferring comfort in their owner's home,
To the cruel privations of freedom.
But, alas! towards the end of the war
The Roberts plantation, situated
In the way of Sherman's great march, was wrecked
With many others, tho' his wife and child
Escaped, thanks to the faithful assistance
Of Jackson, a young male slave, who faced death
To bring his loved mistress and little one
To a place of safety.

When Captain Sam
Returned, after the peace of Appomatox,
Despair was the universal watchword.
His home was in ruins. He had nothing
That the poorest envied. But his wife lived
And he started in with a will to make
Another home for her and his offspring.
Long years it took—years of the hardest toil—
But with horny hands and wrinkled visage
He successfully retrieved his fortune.
Now grayheaded and thin, but full of life,
He was perhaps the most notable man
In all the countryside. A foremost type
Of American, hopeful, honest, brave—
He was a leader at all times, but kind,
Obliging, patriotic. That was why
He was known as "Uncle Sam" and esteemed
By all who knew him. Fearless to the last,
But always the first to forgive, he soon
Had determined America was large,
And that Washington was father of all;

Therefore there was no North not also South,
Nor yet was there a South from which the North
Was barred. But, if he soon forgave the hand
That did him an injury, all he had
Was yours if you ever had been his friend.

His wife was worthy of such a husband
And was his loving helpmeet. She was keen
To help him in all his projects. And oft
Rallied him when the skies were gloomiest
By her unfailing cheerful good nature.
The poor never left her door without alms,
And their welfare was her constant study.

Their only son, who, as a little child
Had been inured to the hardships of war,
And later to the cold lap of poverty,
Was early apprenticed to a tradesman,
That he might, upon entering college,
Be a practical, painstaking student.
The money that he earned as apprentice
Was the means with which he was enabled
To pursue his University course.
This, as Uncle Sam argued, was a way
In which to prove to his son that labor
Was an honorable calling, and that
Hard work is the first round in the ladder
To success and to higher things. The boy
By earning his fees appreciated
To that premeasured extent the value
Of his subsequent training. And in truth
The father's argument was realized.
For his son, on obtaining a degree,
Devoted his life to inventing tools
For the saving of time of mechanics.

It was just after his son had launched out,
That age began to tell on the loved wife
Of Uncle Sam, and it devolved on him
To prolong her years and his happiness.
Leaving his son on the farm to pursue
His laudable life work, the proud father
And mother, went southward, where, they had heard
The weather was milder and more healthful.
Soon imbued with the Florida climate,
Where his wife seemed to improve, Uncle Sam
Proposed, in a growing resort, to build
Them a winter home. And why should he not?
Who, more than the worker, is entitled
In his later years to recreation
And rest? So might an angel argue, but
Fate had ordered it otherwise. At first
His plans went well. He was lauded and praised
By all because of the cash he proposed
To spend in their midst. The papers were filled
With complimentary notes about him,
And everybody vied with each other
To sell him material or labor.

Genial as at home the old gentleman
Entered into community affairs;
Assisting, wherever he could do so,
With both presence and money and counsel.
Volatile to a fault, and proud of him,
It was not long before they had both told
Of their brilliant son in Georgia, whose time
Was now being spent in the perfecting
Of a combination brace with eight bits
(A patent for which had just been obtained)
To be used by workmen in general,
But by carpenters in particular.

Specifications for the new home settled,
Work was begun on construction. It was
Just at this time while selecting labor
To proceed, that Jackson appeared—the slave
To whom Uncle Sam owed his wife and child,
And who, in recognition of his worth,
He had long since sent to an institution
Where trades were taught to negroes. At this place
Jackson had learned to do carpenter work.
Now he came in trouble. His woolly head
Frosted with years, and his shaking limbs
Gained him instant attention. He was black,
He said, and for some reason or other,
Could not get work. Employers turned him off
Because of the labor unions. They said
He had no card and they dared not employ
A “scab.” He had belonged to the Union
At one time but by some secret edict
The local where his name had been enrolled
Lost its charter. This was only a ruse
On the part of the Unionists, and when
He applied to other locals he found
That they all drew the line on his color,
And said negroes were ineligible.

Could not he get a job on the building
Being put up by his “old Massa” Sam?
“Certainly,” said Uncle Sam, and his wife
Smiled her pleasure and consent. And Jackson
Was bidden to appear at work next day—
For, argued Uncle Sam, since old Jackson
Had once risked his life in his behalf, why then
Should he hesitate to give him a lift
Even though by so doing he incurred
The envious taunts of race prejudice.

Jackson had worked at his side hoeing corn
And cotton in Georgia nor had presumed
For that to believe himself socially
Equal. There was no difference in fact
In the eyes of Omnipotent Heaven
But the difference in education,
And the self control, science and morals
That were nurtured by civilization.
If when working together there was naught
But a difference of racial color
To distinguish two men from each other,
Then it was surely ridiculous boast
That could crow over characteristic
That skill, aim, or training could not affect
And which only the Most High could alter.

On the morrow according to promise
Jackson was put at work under the white
Foreman and at once proved ability
To do whate'er was assigned him. The day
Was not half gone, however, when behold!
A stranger appeared and conferred closely
With the various white men on the job.
And at noon they went on strike declaring
Through the unknown stranger as a mouth-piece
That this was a white man's country and they
Would not work or let others work until
Jackson was discharged. Uncle Sam was game.
He said perhaps it was a white man's country
But it was a freeman's country as well.
And while he could not nor would not compel
Them to work, it was still his right to hire
Whoever was willing to come. And so
He bade the stranger good-day and left him
Muttering something about his being
"The Walking Delegate," that represented

The Union, and that unless he gave in
He'd be sorry sooner or later.

This was on Monday. Jackson worked alone
That afternoon and on Tuesday, no men
Appearing to proceed with the building,
Uncle Sam determined to do the rest
With negro help, and required business men
With whom he had bargained for material
To deliver supplies. To his chagrin
He was informed with apologetic words,
That the Union had threatened to boycott
If any material was sold to him;
And rather than go on the "unfair list"
They preferred to lose his trade. Undismayed
Though inconvenienced Uncle Sam made shift
To keep Jackson engaged until he returned,
And left to obtain supplies from the North.

While he was gone a posse at nighttime
Surrounded the work that had been finished
And left it a pile of ruins. Jackson
Appeared and protested, but a bullet
Into the old man's side, gave him just time
To knock at his Master's home and inform
His mistress of the destruction, before
He fell dead at her feet. Shrieking, she swooned;
And when Uncle Sam arrived he found her
Suffering from brain fever, her mind deranged,
And at the point of death. Weeks she lay thus
Till at last Providence called her away.
A coroner's jury, packed with "union" men,
Had a pretended inquest on the corpse
Of Jackson. He was only a nigger—
It served him "damn well right," and a verdict
Of "accidental death" at last alarmed

Uncle Sam and aroused him to the state
Of government.

Still he could scarce believe
That outside of Florida it was thus.
Surely not in Georgia. In Florida
The people were all newcomers gathered
From many other states. He concluded
That they were but rolling stones. The state's fair
name
Was of little moment to them. No doubt
When they had made their "pile" and returned
To the state they called home, it would change them.
In Florida they were making money
And had no time to waste on politics;
While they were sleeping, perhaps, or too keen
On obtaining trade, the lowest natures
Were usurping the governing power.
This he forgivingly allowed the more
When he learned that the state's executive
Owed his office to the fact that he once,
For the sake of gain, had plunged the whole land
Into the horrors of war by breaking
Its solemn contracts and filibustering Spain.

Abandoning all thoughts of building there,
Uncle Sam returned to his plantation,
There to assist his son in the great work
That was now engaging his attention.
The combination brace and bit device
Being complete it was necessary
To obtain cash to assemble the parts
And put it on the market. To do this
Uncle Sam mortgaged his farm. Every cent
It would stand was borrowed to accomplish
The longed-for end. At last it was ready

For sale. A tool most economical
In addition to its great uniqueness,
Was the result of his son's long effort.

But here again came trouble. Florida
Was not alone in being under the ban.
The Union had followed him up. The tool
Was put on the "unfair list" and no where
Could it be sold because of the boycott.
Even the wholesale dealers refused it
As tho' it were poison. What could he do?
His son unable to avoid the loss
That must soon overtake his old father,
And humiliated beyond expression
Because he seemed the source of failure,
Took his own life in paroxysm of grief,
And left Uncle Sam to face out alone
The disaster and shame of foreclosure.

At last the climax arrived. A pauper,
He left the home he worked so hard to gain:
Penniless, homeless, grim; bereft of wife,
Son, faithful servant and even of friends—
For the same dread fear the merchants had shown
Was everywhere discernible. No one dared,
On the surface at all events, to say
What was warranted by each circumstance.
Uncle Sam wandered forth, and in wandering—
Tho' many times bereaved yet worse than all—
Bereft of his pride of country he roamed,
An outcast. For what could the old man do
That would be worth his board?

Broken in health
And chilled by the cowardly fear abroad

Of the monster with which he had battled,
Many times the old soldier reflected,
On the fancied peace of his native land:—

“Peace, aye, peace indeed,” he soliloquized;
“War to the knife is on, twixt capital
“And labor, and I who have always been
“A worker and a friend to the worker,
“Am singled out as a victim.” Aloud
He would call to his deafened countrymen
To uphold him in his battle. They knew
That he had not shirked his country’s call,
And they knew he had fought to a finish
For what they had all thought right. “The foe
“At that time was visible and it was
“A principle for which both fought. But now
“The arch enemy is invisible,
“And nothing but clear greed is its object.
“Its very aim impoverishes itself,
“And success can only mean anarchy.

“Is it right that ignorant men, imbued
“With no higher aim than a raise of pay,
“Should be given the reins of government?
“What but riot, misrule and disaster
“Can follow such short-sighted policy?
“Never in the history of any land
“Was there so grave or terrible a curse
“To be overcome as that which confronts
“The United States today: which first
“Murdered my faithful servant; drove my wife
“Insane; made a suicide of my son;
“Robbed me of my property, and pursues
“Me even now because I dare protest
“Against a tyranny of ignorance

"And selfishness. If I could only see
"The barbarian hordes I am fighting
"I would single handed avenge the lives
"Of the too many innocent victims
"That have already fallen like my own.
"But ignorance is cowardly and seeks
"Behind strikes, boycott and dynamite bombs
"To paralyze the nation with fear.
"Mid-night assassins never accomplish
"Reform and whoever adopts such arms
"Have no end but plunder in view."

Loudly

The old man stormed but not a soul was moved,
Nor a voice raised in his behalf. Spurred on
By his wrongs he determined never to rest
Until his apathetic or palsied
Country was aroused to its awful peril.
"Here was a blight," he said, "More to be feared
"Than leprosy, and if we have a choice
"Of who we shall recognize as tyrant—
"But must have tyranny at all hazards,—
"Let us serve capital and refinement
"Rather than labor and brutality."

THE PATRIOT'S LAMENT.

I WEEP for my country—I groan in despair,
That tyranny thrives in a region so fair:
And oh such a tyrant! I blush for its shame,
Since *ignorance* sullies my country's good name.

I weep for my country—I weep and grow sad,
That merit should languish, and gentleness fade;
While brazen and brutal—in loudness and lust,
The emptiest heads lord it over the just.

I weep for my country—intelligent once,
But now of all countries the veriest dunce:
That quarrels with the wealth that within it is stored,
And takes from true labor its honest reward.

I weep for my country—whence mercy is flown—
That crown of past greatness is no longer known:
Should downtrodden negro or mongol offend;
E'en priests from the pulpit his death would defend.

I weep for my country—whose honor is dead;
Whose highest ambition is Union man's bread.
“Less work and more pay” is the motto today
That spurs our once world power to civil affray.

I weep for my country—I weep while I pray
That Heaven will release her from demagogue's sway:
For where such may rule sweet refinement grows shy,
And Learning—Art—Science—Invention—all die.

I weep for my country—and oh that my tears,
Could turn into prophets to silence my fears:
Foretelling disaster to blatant-mouthed pride,
Now wielding a sceptre where freedom's denied.

I weep for my country—and would that my blood
In martyrdom shed might redound to her good:
For then would I rally to Liberty's cause;
And rescue my country from Union made laws.

I weep for my country—and tho' I face death,
Denouncing its tyrant with every breath;
Yet gladly I'll die for posterity's sake:
That it may from basest of serfdom awake.

PART II

Bill Sykes was born in Chicago. To say
When, within a year or two, was as hard
For Bill to do as for any one else.
His great massive frame; his large coarse features,
His furtive blue eyes or his thin blonde hair
Gave no indication of the winters
That had come and gone since he was brought forth.
He had never seen his father. Indeed,
So far as Bill was concerned, what mattered?
His mother, a low type Polish woman,
Who had early been killed in a street brawl
Had been cruel enough to serve for both.

He did not even know his father's name
But had gone by his mother's maiden name
Until once when making his bread himself
As a street Arab makes it, he was caught
By the police in a melee with waifs
And put in the lock-up. The evidence
Showed him up in such a disgusting light
That the Judge referred to him in the name
Of Dickens's most brutal character,
And it stuck to him thereafter because
Of the unpronounceableness of the one
He had to that time been wearing.

To him
The name was a relief. He had never
Read Dickens's works and even if he had
The character after whom he was called
Was more or less his ideal. Besides
It was so much easier to say "Sykes"
And whatever was easy he admired.
That had always been his long suit. His size
And pugnacious disposition ever
Gave him prominence among his fellows.

He never was apprenticed to a trade,
But by sheer force of presumption he soon
Grew intimate enough with hammer and saw
To bully his way as a carpenter.
By joining the Union this was further
Assured; and thus Bill began his career.

And such a career! Schooled as he had been
In the slums; surrounded in his boyhood
By conditions that led up to the riots
In Chicago in the early Eighties;
In at the beginning of Unionism
On his arrival at manhood's estate:
His nature which was all animal took sides
At once in the great fight between labor
And capital. It was the very outlet—
The one channel by which his base desires
Might be accomplished and yet his life seem
To be governed by preconceived design.
Without a particle of fine feeling,
Without a suggestion of religion,
Here was the opportunity that placed
Numbers at his back in case of trouble;
And a cudgel in his hands at all times
With which to get even with human kind
For his having been ushered into being
A nondescript and an outcast. Envious
Of wealth but not quite ambitious enough
To acquire it, it was always a feast
Or a famine with him.

Lazy, unkempt,
Immoral, but sufficiently astute
To hide behind a hypocrite's bluster,
He was just the kind to incite to crime
And bloodshed and all kinds of anarchy

And yet to keep himself safe in the background.
Every vice was his, and no father
Ever trusted him near his home or children
Without bemoaning the gruesome contact.
It was only in a gathering of men,
United for the one selfish purpose
Of advancing themselves at any cost—
Without regard for their neighbor nor yet
Without regard to even the higher call
Of their country or civilization,—
That a man like Bill Sykes could ever have
Any weight. In the Union he often spoke
And seldom failed of his object.

His first
Great hit was made when on one occasion
He complained of one of the union men
For having worked too hard and set a pace
That the rest of the gang had to follow.
The member complained of, being well trained
And naturally quick in his action,
Was unable even after complaint
To amend his course to suit Bill; and so
At the next meeting of the local lodge,
After a stormy discussion in which
Bill was the chief prosecution, and urged
His three pet theories: decrease of output;
To loaf is true liberty; and that here
Was a toady who needed expulsion;
The question was put to a vote and Bill
Was a glorious victor. From thenceforth
The too honest worker had, as "a scab,"
To make a precarious living. His fate
Was that of many with whom the future
And Bill had to deal.

Not long after this
The movement for an eight-hour day began,
And the Council to which Bill belonged
Was among the first to boost it along.
Loudly he talked in its favor and soon
It had taken on enough strength to act.
It was Bill who first proposed that a strike
Be ordered unless less hours were allowed;
And ere long his proposal was law.
Then began the first organized conflict
In which Bill acted against capital.

Without a family, used to dire want,
With no ambition to bother or shame
Him in his actions, he was untrammelled
And consequently vindictive and hot
In the contest. Scathing in his rebukes
Of any cessation of hostility,
He soon became by sheer aggressiveness
The Leader. Such a hold did he at last
Obtain that it was ominous indeed
For anyone to oppose his wishes.

One night after a month of vain struggle
Had elapsed, one of the members appeared
In dire distress and beseeched the union
To give in or else increase the per diem;
As on the very day the strike began
His aged father and mother had met
With a street car accident. Instant death
Resulted to the one while the other
Was now lying dangerously injured
And kept alive only by most careful
Attention. His wife was about to be
Delivered of her fifth child and hunger

Was pinching the faces of the others.
It was simply necessity with him
And unless they gave him instant relief
He must go back to work. A proposal
To allot him an extra allowance
Was laughed to scorn by Bill.

“Every man
“Would have the same kind of story to tell
“Before a week was out if such were done.
“I’ll be damned if I’ll listen to such talk.
“We are on strike for a great principle
“And any man who scabs will not scab long.”
The stricken member passed out and next day
It was reported he was at work.
That night, on his way home, he was waylaid
And the next morning his body was found
Beaten black and blue. On his coat was pinned
A paper with the words: “To hell with scabs.”
The police arrested Bill and tried him
For the murder. “He made a threat,” they said—
And “the writing on the paper was his.”
An alibi was well proved, however,
By a dozen well tutored witnesses
And a jury of strike sympathizers
Turned him loose once more victorious.

The strike
Prevailed and Bill thereby was a hero.
He was called from one local to another
Throughout the land to exhort and direct
Similar movements. Instead of working
At his trade he was, as he most desired,
A professional striker. The varied
Tricks of the calling became his by rote,
And he succeeded most remarkably

In all his undertakings. Over the land
He roamed from Maine to Florida. And from
Washington to California. Unionism
Grew day by day under his strong methods.
The weaklings or finer natures, who dared
To suggest impediments or refused
To adopt the system of cruelty,
Coercion and crime which he urged, soon learned
That he ruled with a hand of iron. Death,
Either quick or by starvation degrees,
Was the punishment of open rebellion.
It did not matter to Bill who he crushed
In his long, triumphal march.

Blood, Blood, Blood !

Was his appetite. The Union system
Gave him the chance to assuage his great thirst
Indiscriminately. The narrow minds
Of the majority of Union men
Failed to detect the dire desolation
That success meant for them. The businesses
By which they were employed dwindled and failed ;
The materials necessary to life
Grew dearer ; munificence of the rich
To institutions for the old, the blind,
The poor and the decrepit grew less free,
And the expense of maintenance was placed
Upon those unable to afford it.
Capital sought other lands more secure
For places of investment ; researches
For the development of science and art
Were losing their impetus ; a distrust
Was growing among professional men
Lest the increasing violence of Unions
Would sooner or later be directed
At all who had a competence, and so

Their services lacked sympathy and were
That much less efficient.

Graft and deceit,
Hurry-to-get-rich and out of harness,
Began more and more to influence men
Who held office, and who handled the cash
Of the people. The old time notions of fame
Except for that of a Nero were lost.
The restrictions the Union placed on work
With a view to curtailing the output,
And the compulsory methods in force
As to promotion by seniority,
Deadened all natural desire to excel
Amongst artisans and killed invention.
Thus the increasing comforts that follow
In the wake of diligent industry,
And healthy emulation were lessened
By tendencies to laziness and ease,
And the Union man's family suffered
Equally with the rest of human kind.

The children of the Union man imbibed
Hatred of anything that might be higher
Than manual labor, with their mother's milk.
Merchants for protection against boycott
Made secret combinations resulting
In the overthrow of competition.
Preachers and newspaper men, at one time
Divinely appointed critics and guides
Of humanity, became venial
Tools in the hands of enthroned ignorance.
Desire to be popular and distrust
Of that bomb of conspiracy—Boycott—
Began to dwarf, cow and crush the land.
Absolutely fallacious had become

The national motto. "*In Unity
Is Weakness*" became daily more apparent.

But such considerations do not phase
A character like Bill Sykes. He glories
In the ruin that he creates. "God Damn
Humanity!" was his inward motto;
"Down with the bosses!" is his Union flag.
And like sheep led to slaughter the men
Treat like a savior their decoy, and go
The pace that can but end in Anarchy.

One time Bill was called out west of Spokane
To help a bridge gang on the great divide
To obtain an eight-hour day. Up to date
The railroad officials with whom they dealt
Had neglected to listen to complaints
And threatened wholesale discharge, as their work
Was easy and could be done by Chinese.
This was a situation somewhat new
To Bill but he was quite equal to it.
While Chinese might do regular repairs,
It would take some skill to construct new work.
Let them arrange to strike at a moment
When a fast train was due to pass across
Some bridge. Rather than delay the express
Their demands would no doubt be conceded.
If not—Bill shook his head knowingly—
They would go back to work the next morning,
As the U. S. mails must be delivered.

The ultimatum was given one noon.
In accordance with Bill's advice, no word
Being received at four, the men struck work.
The bridge, the foreman decided was safe

So far as the coming train was concerned.
And he hastened to wire for instructions.
Ere they had come, however, the express
Came thundering by. As it reached the bridge
A timber suddenly snapped, then a crash
Was heard, and the Pacific express train
With its mails and human freight was a mass
Of debris and death in the gulch below.
How the wreck happened only Bill Sykes knew;
But the foreman was put under arrest.
His trial was speedy. His refusal
To grant an eight-hour day was evidence
Sufficient, in the Jury's mind, of guilt;
Bill was one of the loudest accusers,
And he was sentenced to the law's limit.
Needless to say the men went back to work
On their own terms and one more victory
Was added to the many that had been won
By organized labor.

At Boston, Bill
Also made himself famous. A lawyer
Formerly known as the workingman's friend
And who had represented the district
In Congress, had suddenly been tabooed
By the Union because of his failure
To respond to an order of boycott
Against a barber who had been listed
As unfair. The barber's offense had been
The hiring of his natural brother,
Whose dues to the Union were in arrears,
Not from intention but because ill health
Had made his expenses greater than
His income. The barber had employed him
Against the protest of the other men.
They left their chairs and reported the case

To the Union and the Union had placed
His name on the unfair list. For long years
The congressman had patronized this shop
Because he was the only artisan
Who had been able to shave him with ease
And was content to do the bidding
Of his customers without pestering
Requests about nonsensical extras.
And so, when Bill, as "Walking Delegate,"
On behalf of the Union informed him
That he must, as one of the customers,
Show his sympathy with the workingman
By going to another shop; he asked
For particulars, and declined point blank
To uphold the Union in any such
Absurdity when he learned the facts.

Here was a case that specially appealed
To Bill's pugnacity. Temerity
Such as this must be punished. He who dared
At this late day to question a fiat
Of the Trades and Labor Council must learn
A lesson. An election was coming
And the Congressman's defeat must be sure.
Through his well-known sympathy for labor
And his admitted skill as a lawyer
He had heretofore had a walkover
When he made a race. On this occasion,
To humiliate him, a socialist
Of the most radical type was brought out
As his opponent. It was a struggle
For government by the poorer classes
Or by a united people.

The "Hub,"

So long noted for its culture, became
The strategic position for a fight
Between labor and capital, and soon
Every Union in the community
Was sending forth its fiats to tradesmen.
Whenever a storekeeper had so far
Forgot his business as to take the side
Of the Congressman, a boycott began
That soon brought him to his senses. Parades
With flying mottoes advertised the choice
Of the great ragtag and bobtail classes;
And the press, to be popular, took up
The cry of the mob and urged that a change
Was necessary.

Bill Sykes was happy.

Assessments for campaign funds were ordered
By him and contributions were required
From every manufacturing concern
That was run by Union men. For the sake
Of policy the very victims proposed
By socialistic ideals, gave the most;
And Bill saw to it that his trifling wants
For personal expenses did not go
Begging. The buying of votes with a drink
Was the slogan of Unionism, and Bill,
As chief dispenser among the hoboos,
Became a veritable god. Loudly
His praise was sung while in his sleeve he sneered
At the blatant hot air of his worshipers,
And hoped for the time that would surely come
When dire distrust would tear them asunder,
As they were now tearing the government.

At last, Election Day came. Great Boston
Went to the polls in abject apathy
As to what the result would be. In vain
Their Congressman called to their attention
What was at stake and *how* he had incensed
The Labor Unions against him. In vain
He warned the people of the base tyrant
He was combatting and that it was them
Who must suffer if he were defeated.
They turned deaf ear to all but the clamor
Of the hoboes.

In the wards where culture
Did seem to have some standing, inspectors
Nominated by Bill Sykes held the sway,
And in the most scandalous manner exchanged
For the ballot boxes of the city,
Boxes especially contrived to receive
In a false bottom any votes well known
To be inimical. By this method
Every ward in the city gave large odds
In favor of the rabid socialist;
And once more Bill and organized labor
Was triumphant. The moral influence
Of so learned a place as cultured Boston
Going socialist was available
In tight struggles elsewhere; and to Bill Sykes
Its value could not be calculated.

But Bill was not satisfied with defeat
At the polls of the erring Congressman.
Poverty would make him more repentent.
So a suit for libel was engineered
For certain expressions that had been made
By the Congressman during the campaign
That reflected on the "high" character

Of his opponent. Punitive damages
Were asked and a jury where Bill Sykes shone
Returned a verdict that practically
Took from the lawyer all that he was worth.

And so with many another battle.
Victory after victory met Bill
At every turn, and from place to place
He roamed leaving behind him at each stop
A wider swath of labor Unionism
And a more intense hatred of capital.

THE SONG OF THE WALKING DELEGATE.

No bouquets please. I'm at my ease;
I never work over-time.
I am The Walking Delegate:
My purposes are sublime.
I see that only Union men
Get the paying work to do;
And as for scabs and men "what blabs:"
God help them when I get through.
Yes, I am The Walking Delegate:
The Labor Union's Joss:
The great I am—serene and calm—
The Nation's Coming Boss.

A time there was when stringent laws
Made of working men the scum;
But now, by God, they are the rod—
'Tis Labor's millenium.
And here I am serene and calm,
The Laborer's happy choice,
With scourge and lash to torture cash,
And echo the Union's voice.

I have a lease on the police,
And I make them toe the mark:
If I but nod the laborer's hod,
Turns into a weapon dark.
I name the Judge upon the Bench,
And he shows his gratitude
By savage thrust at every Trust,
That offers to treat me rude.

The Jury box is where "I locks"
The men who are tried and true;

Thro' whom I twist the capitalist,
And plunder his money too.
I always mix in politics:
It's there that I make my dough:
I name the card—and for reward
They're all at my beck, you know.

My mantle fits the man who sits
In the presidential chair:
And he straightway begins to play
To the gods who put him there:
I pull his tail and without fail
He starts to "investigate"
And careful reads how his great deeds
Suit The Walking Delegate.

The great free press is in duress,
For I have it in my hand;
Whoever heard of unkind word
When I'm stalking thro' the land.
The office force is mine of course;
And lest it should go on strike—
The editor smiles at all my wiles—
I do with him as I like.

The stage likewise may not despise
The wonderful power I wield
And with the school, which too, I rule,
Have nothing to do but yield.
For if they make an open break
I order a boycott quick;
And school or stage soon lose their rage—
For a boycott makes them sick.

I never pay my devious way,
When I'm on the railroad train:

"I'm in the gang" is my harangue
To the ticket puncher's brain,
The cabbies too, they try to do
Their little mite with a vim:
So as THE WALKING DELEGATE
I'm strictly in the swim.

The banker's clerks our system works
I'm getting them well in line;
And soon you'll hear the bank clerks cheer
The union's bloodred ensign.
They're needed bad to make us glad,
And ferret the gold bugs out;
So for more pay they'll ask today—
Tomorrow for Union shout.

I've left but one real task undone
Of what I'd begun to do;
And for last prize I'll organize
The Army and Navy too.
Then Union joys will come my boys;
And into the bright blue skies
Will plutocrats with all their brats
In Column of Caesar rise.

PART III

Earthquakes and fire had done their very worst
To the fair city by the Golden Gate
And in their wake had come the greater scourge
Of dishonest government. Unemployed
From all over the United States had
Flocked to Frisco after disaster
And under Union colors sought to rule
And keep out competition. No tactic
Was left untried to complete the ruin
That nature had begun. Graft and boodle
Among men in office went hand in hand
With demands for exorbitant wages,
And eight-hour days. Men who had lost thousands
That by industry they had earned were forced
By a system of holdup to squander
What little remained on highwaymen
Upheld by Union in lawless demands.
Intimidation, coercion and stealth,
Made short work of the millions that poured in
In charity from all parts of the land,
And *anarchy*, under a pseudonym,
Was holding court in San Francisco daily.

To this place two men with opposite aims
Were at about the same time attracted:
Bill Sykes, full of his anti-capital schemes,
And *Uncle Sam* more than ever convinced
That his country's life-blood was being sapped,
And determined at all hazards to fight
Its tyrant wherever he might find him.

It was not very long before they met.
Organized labor had become aware
Of the presence of Japanese labor
And Japanese labor was a sort of "scab"
That could not be compelled by coercion.

Impelled by the narrowest motives,
Selfish to the core and without judgment,
Resistance to Japanese immigration
Was determined upon. Who but Bill Sykes
Could successfully accomplish this end?
And so Bill was there urging the faithful,
And plotting against the Powers that be.
Already one riot had taken place
Under his leadership, and another
Was on the tapis.

A public meeting
At a street corner under direction
Of the Asiatic Exclusion League,
So called—(although organized sub rosa
In the Labor Union) was in progress.
And Bill, as the Walking Delegate-in-Chief
Specially sent from the East, was speaking.
Around the stump upon which he harangued
Were gathered a hundred or more people,
Attracted at first by curiosity
From among the passers-by. Committees,
However, with the object of the meeting
At heart, were on the outskirts of the crowd
Diligently soliciting hearers;
And as the speech progressed the mob increased
Both in numbers and enthusiasm.

"Men," said Bill, "Do you intend to be starved
"Like rats while those yellow men take your jobs?
"Do you intend to stand idly aside
"So that these Brownies may have lots of work,
"While your families are at home suffering
"For the necessities of life?
"Who brought them here? Who aided them to come?
"Not the laboring man for he don't want

"That kind of competition. Who's to blame?
"If you must know it's *the capitalist*.
"Not content with forming trusts that grind men
"Into slaves, he sends secret messengers
"To far-off Japan for ready-made slaves
"And they are brought here with their cheap labor
"And infirmities and toadyism
"To stamp out whatever manhood is left
"In the American laboring man.

"But they can't do it. We are not that kind.
(*"Not by a damn sight," said one of the crowd.*)
"We are the people and we've learned our place.
"We'll show old Money Bags where he is at—
"And our combination is flesh and blood;
"Not dollars. The time has come for labor
"To govern. All signs point that way and you
"Don't want to be the last in line. These Japs
"Are the instruments of your degradation.
"To hell with them! Until they are away
"We can not increase wages, much less
"Shorten our day. They say there are treaties
"That must be considered. But who made them?
"What do you and I care about such things?
"Treaties are of no weight to Union men
"Since Union men did not make them. Who cares
"About treaties with heathen at any rate?
"What rights have they compared with rights of ours;
"For my part I want my own kith and kin
"Looked after first so long as they're not 'scabs.'
"And treaties, that let Chinks and Japanese
"Take the good beef out of our mouths, can't stand."

"That they can't!" "Damn the treaties!" "We'll show
them!"
Were the signs of the crowd's close attention.

"It is the duty of you workers here
"To show the bosses who's who. If it's Japs
"They want, let 'em have Japs, but see to it
"That they're dead ones. I'm a peaceable man
"Myself but sometimes it does less harm
"To get rid of a nuisance at once
"Than wait for it to permeate the air
"That we and our families have to breathe.
"What if Japan is a rising nation;
"They'll have to rise mighty high to scare me.
" 'We're from Missouri' and a few *dead* Japs
"Will mean *live* wages for the survivors,
"It seems to me."

Loud applause was brought out.
By this sally and Bill would have gone on
Had not a hoary-headed wayfarer,
In threadbare garments, shiny and soiled,
Wearing a goatee and streaming white locks,
Pressed forward and demanded to be heard.
Thinking that the old man was a convert
Bill gave quick way to him in the belief
That his age would lend weight. And Uncle Sam,
For it was he, stepped on to the rostrum
And appealed to the motley assemblage
In a voice tremulous with emotion:

"Gentlemen, I am an American
"Born and bred. I am from the Sunny South
"And before many of you were thought of
"I was fighting for the independence
"Of that part to which I deemed I owed
"Existence and whatever else I had
"That that portion was protecting for me.
"I do not question the arbitrament
"Of our great war. I gladly joined my voice

“To that of Gordon, of Grady, of Graves,
“And to secure a united country
“I sank all differences in the hope
“That a greater America would arise.

“An America where the famous words
“Of the more famous Lincoln would be true
“More than ever before, and we would have
“A government that would without question
“Be *of*, *by*, and *for* a happy people.
“An America, whose glorious past,
“Shining brighter thro’ the clearing battle,
“Would cement the breaches of civil war
“And inspire to a common destiny
“Of freedom, greatness and prosperity.
“An America where instead of strife
“For divided ends, the only struggle
“Would be that of a united nation
“To lead an admiring world in morals,
“In art, science, learning and in commerce.
“An America where honest labor
“Could be sure of its reward and where class,
“Instead of selfishly vying with class
“For a supremacy that means nothing,
“Would be so graded as to make a ladder
“By which industry might mount round by round
“From the very lowest walk to the chair
“Of a loved and respected president.

“But what has come of my hope? Who is there
“In these troublous times will venture to say
“That America is even as great
“As she was fifty years ago? Who dares
“In the face of the facts to testify
“That this people is governed *by*, *of* or *for*
“Its best interests? *Is it governed at all?*

"And if so, for whose good and benefit?
"Blatant demagogues would quickly answer
"For dishonest purposes, in a way
"That would heap more shame on our condition.
"But I am here, gentlemen, to speak truth;
"To administer antidotes; to raise
"Before you a picture that will show you
"How fast are fading those lofty ideals
"With which we started out as a nation.
"What does the outside world see here today?
"Is it a glorious or inglorious view?
"Alas for America, we are forced
"To humble our pride and confess our shame.

"Mob rule runs riot and is unpunished.
"Lynching, and rapine and conspiracy
"Triumph over law and order. Murder
"And anarchy stalk abroad through the land.
"First we cringe and bow to a tyranny
"Of gold. Then in righteous indignation
"We fly from one extreme to the other
"And fall backwards while a baser tyrant—
"The tyrant of ignorance—tramples us
"To earth and we lose honor, enterprise,
"Ambition,—sacrificing everything
"To prejudice against class, religion,
"Or race, and a selfishness that sinks us
"To the level of savages.

"We start
"With the ideal that all men are equal
"In the eyes of law. We demand that law
"Shall assure us freedom of speech, freedom
"Of the press; free migration to or from
"Our land; free exercise of religion,
"Whatever it may be; no taxation

"Without representation and a fair
"Competition in labor as well as trade.
"Of all these shiboleths that were the boast
"Of early Americans can you point
"To one today that is not more honored
"In the breach than the observance?

"What man

"Among you will at once admit the force
"Of that war-cry of the revolution,
"And concede that all men *should* be equal?
"Do we now open our gates to the world
"And say come and we will consider you
"As one of ourselves and reciprocate
"In learning from each other the virtues
"Of our various civilizations?

"The taxes of today are collected
"On the very opposite principle
"To those collected by our forefathers,
"And the favored who are represented
"See to it that the unrepresented
"(Or should we call it misrepresented)
"Are the only ones who are forced to pay.
"The press instead of being free and frank
"To criticise in a courteous manner
"What seems open to fuller explanations
"Becomes the tool of whoever will buy,
"And owns as Master, filthy lucre,
"Whether coming in the shape of *Front Page Ads*
"Or in *threats of boycott*.

"Freedom of speech

"Is now a myth; and so intolerant
"Has the nation become that few speakers

"Can hope for a hearing from an audience
"Who holds views that are at all contrary.
"Martyrs to the cause of a free speech and press
"Are daily becoming more numerous;
"But an apathetic public has failed
"To see thus far that it is their freedom
"Rather than a martyr's life that is being paid.
"The free exercise of religious belief—
"That bulwark of national existence—
"Has already lost its prestige with us
"And religious persecution obtains
"In the United States and is sanctioned
"By the statutes of the generations
"Now pretending to make laws in Congress.
"The Mormon and the Christian Scientist,
"Are not the only witnesses to this.
"Fair competition whether in labor
"Or in trade, which ensures certain progress
"And guarantees excellence and skill,
"Is now for Americans almost void;
"And with combinations of capital,
"And unions of labor both against it,
"Is fast becoming a thing of the past."

At this juncture signs of disapproval
Were visible in the throng surrounding,
And Bill Sykes, who had wakened to the fact
That the old man was not a unionist,
At all events, sought to bring him to time
And to the point by shouting, "What about
The yellow peril?" while Uncle Sam answered:

"I'm coming to that, but I've something else
"To say before I get there. I told you
"When I started out that I must speak truth,
"And I propose to speak all of the truth

"On the line that was suggested to me
"By the words of the last speaker."

"Cat calls"

*And cries of "Pull him down" came from the crowd
But, nothing daunted, Uncle Sam went on;*

"It may not be palatable to some
"Who are before me, but it is duty,
"And an inextinguishable affection
"For the land that gave me birth, that forces
"Me to say that I believe—that I know
"From bitter experience—that unionism
"Is a greater menace to liberty
"Than the capitalism it seeks to destroy."

Some hisses from the audience would have stopped
A less earnest speaker, but Uncle Sam
Was thinking of his murdered wife and son
And apparently oblivious of the roughs;
He burst forth:

"There was a time in my life
"When I sympathized with the working men,
"Of the big cities particularly,
"In their seemingly unequal battle
"Against wealth. In the villages and towns
"Where I, myself, was a worker I saw
"No ground for complaint as with ambition
"I and any other laborer could there
"Succeed to our heart's content. I now see
"That the same conditions surround men
"In cities as in towns, and that the wail
"I heard was that simply of *envy, impatience,*

"*Incompetence*, and worse still—*intemperance*—
"Striving to wrest by dishonest methods
"The plums from their more honorable brothers.
"I now regret with all my heart and soul
"The sanction I gave to the first Union
"Of labor. For I find by dissection
"That if you take out of the Union hall
"All that have been forced in there by coercion,
"You'll have nothing left but the four vices
"Already enumerated, and that
"Of these *envy* and *incompetence*
"Are the largest product by easy odds
"Of the so-called Labor Union."

"No, no!"

"Down with him!" "You're a liar!" and "Prove it!"
Could be heard over the dire uproar
That this thrust caused, and Uncle Sam, aroused
To his old war time ardor, loudly cried:

"Yes, I'll prove it if you will give me time.
"How can there be any other result
"Than incompetence from institutions
"That discourage industry and demand
"Promotion by seniority rather
"Than by merit? How can aught but envy
"Be inculcated where antagonism
"To every other interest but that
"Of self is preached?

"If a Union member,
"No matter how competent, fails to pay
"The exactions of unionhood, his card
"Is taken from him, and, as an outcast,
"His very livelihood is taken away,

“And he is compelled to humble himself
“And own that *dues* rather than *competence*
“Is the one thing needful, or starve to death.
“*Imprisonment for debt* was long ago
“Considered a relic of barbarism,
“But Unionism would punish *debt with death*.
“It would flay alive the man with money
“Because he has it; and for lack of it
“It condemns its own brother to starvation.

“Unionism from a purely selfish end
“Has taken a stand against child labor
“But while it would in its hypocrite love
“For the child save it from toil’s dire effects,
“It, at the same time, would take from its mother
“What chance she has of an honest living;
“And force her on the street to ruin
“Rather than have her *lower Union pay*.
“What unselfish principle, I demand,
“Has the Labor Union fought for?

“Tell me,

“If you can, of one universal good
“That has been given to mankind by the strength
“Of a combination so comprehensive?
“On the other hand I might startle you
“With details of disaster so shocking
“That, were your hearts not steeled against the shame
“You would weep with me for your falling country.
“And these disasters are the necessary
“Results of the Union’s lack of justice—
“To say nothing of its lack of wisdom
“Or mercy. The death of a hundred odd
“Is of small moment to telegraphers
“Who are bent on more wages for less time
“And they strike on and the Quebec bridge falls

“With its loss of life and destruction
“Of the people’s treasure as an effect.
“The convict, to suit a Union brother,
“Must live in idleness, scheming more crime,
“Rather than by useful toil form habits
“Of industry to ensure his reform.

“The foreigner, to whom America
“Owes its very distinctiveness of race
“And those parts of which it specially boasts,
“Is now an enemy from the Union view;
“And America for Americans
“Is the rallying cry of the demagogues.
“Every civilization has its gains
“And no alien can come to our country
“Who does not bring with him some attribute
“That liberalizes and enlarges us
“In one way or another.”

“How about
The Japanese?” shouted a listener,
But Uncle Sam heedless of the ferment
And impatience of his large audience
Took no notice of the interruption.

“America as a whole must profit
“By every immigrant that enters it.
“And it will require no expulsion acts
“To keep him out when that condition ends.
“If we are Christians or if we worship
“At e’en lower shrines, our religious views
“Alone will plead for the lowly stranger
“Who we find within our gates. A just God
“Must protect His people whether they be
“White, black, brown, yellow or red, and to Him



“And you, aye, you, who would now stop my mouth
If you could, may, ere you know, be victims
Of the same far-reaching conspiracy.”

"Intoleration and race prejudice
"Are crimes that may not be left unpunished.
"Injustice invariably recoils
"Upon itself, and that civilization
"Which seeks to appropriate for itself
"What was meant for mankind has missed its mark
"And must be trampled by a progress
"That is universal.

"Right must prevail.
"The Lilliputian squeaks of mere cheese thieves
"Cannot change the plans of Almighty God.
"The man who urges you to kill off Japs
"As though they were so many dogs has urged
"Other men to kill off and undermine
"The negroes whom their fathers had captured
"In Africa and dragged here unwillingly
"To work just as they now are working—
"And why forsooth? Because a prejudice
"Against another race assists for a time
"The theory of reduced competition.

"But the time will come—in fact it is here,—
"When the same selfish theory will need
"Not even race prejudice to say who
"Shall or shall not have a right to exist.
"And you, aye, you, who would now stop my mouth
"If you could, may, ere you know, be victims
"Of the same far-reaching conspiracy.
"I warn you against the base demagogues
"Who under the guise of saving, would lead you
"To your doom. They are all like Bill Sykes there,
"Who does not remember me in the poverty
"Of which he is the cause. But they're like him
"I say—*Thieves, conspirators, assassins—*"

As the last word fell from the speaker's lips
A rock from the direction in which Sykes
Had been standing struck Uncle Sam's temple,
And he fell dead, simultaneously
With a shout from the crowd of "There they go!"
As a party of Japanese passed by.
A commotion at once ensued and stones
Were flying through the air in all directions,
When Bill, taking advantage of the riot,
Called the attention of the police,
As they arrived to quell the disturbance,
To the prostrate body of Uncle Sam
And stated in the most plausible manner,
How the "poor old man" had been struck down
By one of the missiles hurled by the Japs;
And in those tones of injured innocence
That he had many times before summoned
To his aid, Bill demanded that all Japs
In the city be imprisoned until
Such time as the one who killed Uncle Sam
Had confessed.

GOD RULES

REPUBLICAN or Democrat! What matter which has
sway?

Or Populist or Socialist—give every dog his day.
Their reigns will be like puffs of smoke that partly
hide the sun:

And while they wrangle o'er the spoils—behold their
day is done!

Each foolish set gives place in turn to other sets of
fools:

But Heaven be praised above them all, unmoved by
mobs, GOD RULES.

The Prohibitionist expands by one wholesale restraint;
The Independent vaunts his fill of lack of party taint;
The Suffragette would lead the land—if once her sex
could vote;

And Labor Parties fair or foul would clutch their
country's throat:

But give each time and soon or late they'll fail like
other tools,

And on the tomb wherein they lie we'll read the words:
GOD RULES.

It matters not what name we give to temporary place;
All human systems must result in near or far disgrace:
Just give them vent and uncurbed rein, and lo! their
boasted strength

Will be the very stumbling block that trips them up at
length

Above the din, above the strife, above the bloody pools,
Thank God loved Truth must win at last and prove to
man: GOD RULES.

Vain prejudice of race and class, vile lust for graft and
power;
Base arrogance of petty wealth—each have their short-
lived hour:
And even Law, man's greatest pride, in turn grows
weak and falls—
ALL, *all* are parts of one great whole whose end faint
hope appalls:
Eternal mills are grinding slow our laws, our creeds,
our schools,
Till each gives place to higher things—for over all,
GOD RULES.

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